

**A FAR EASTERN MUNICH:
APPEASEMENT BY OMISSION**

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"...Effects in war seldom proceed from one simple cause, but from several joint causes, and that therefore it is not enough in a candid and impartial spirit to trace back the series of events to its beginning, but is then still necessary to assign to each of the contributing causes its due weight. This leads, therefore to a closer investigation of their nature, and thus a critical investigation may lead us into what is the proper field of theory."

Karl von Clausewitz

PREFACE

The influence of history on foreign policy decisions is recognizable and demonstrable. The extent of this influence is described elusively at best. Often, the interpretation given to historical fact is more significant than the fact itself. To the degree that an historical concept is part of the decision-making process, the resultant events will become dependent upon past history. Thus decisions of causation are able to evoke trends of action or behavioral patterns that can become self-perpetuating or, in a less positive sense, at least reinforcing. On the other hand, if decisions are made intentionally to avert what is predicted to be an analogous situation, the repeatability or cyclic theory of history is broken. It is the success of this latter case which is the most difficult to substantiate: there is no convenient means of recording non-events.

Historical analogy can be a useful tool in the decision-making process if used with circumspection. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., a noted historian, has described the role of history in international polity:

History, in short, does not furnish the statesman with a detailed scenario of particular relationships or policies. Too often it equips his decisions with good rather than real reasons, holding out a mirror in which he fatuously sees his own face.... This is not an argument against the knowledge of history: it is an argument against the superficial knowledge of history. The only antidote to a shallow knowledge of history is a deeper knowledge, the knowledge which produces not dogmatic certitude but diagnostic skill, not clairvoyance but insight.¹

A classic example of the effect of a superficial knowledge of history is the "unconditional surrender" policy sponsored during World War II by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Schlesinger indicated that this policy was

¹Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Bitter Heritage: Vietnam and American Democracy, 1941-1966 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), 95-6.

derived in part from an erroneous recollection of American history.²

Roosevelt believed that General Grant had called for an "unconditional surrender" at Appomattox and then had responded to the surrender with acts of generosity to the defeated foe. This was the spirit that Roosevelt wanted to prevail at the end of the war. The facts, however, show that Grant talked of "unconditional surrender" at Fort Donelson and Vicksburg, not at Appomattox. Thus what implied magnanimity to Roosevelt, had a totally different connotation for most people.

The value of probing into historical decisions and policy developments is not necessarily related as much to the scorecard tabulations of wins versus losses in the national interest as it is to elucidating the evolution of processes. Extending this theme, it can be shown that the intent of individual decisions for national security may by the process of evolution result in a policy that in actuality subverts the original objectives of the decision-makers.

²Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "Roosevelt and His Detractors," Harper's Magazine, Vol. CC, No. 1201 (June 1950), 65.

I

FOREIGN AFFAIRS: AN UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITY

History has influenced the meaning of appeasement. Events subsequent to the Munich Crisis of 1938 have left the stigma of failure on the foreign policies of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain.¹ Appeasement, for many people who have lived or studied the events of World War II, conjures vivid memories of Mr. Chamberlain's arrival at the Heston Aerodrome when he waved an Anglo-German Declaration and boasted that "peace in our time" had been secured.²

The pacificatory approach to foreign affairs was not initially formulated by Mr. Chamberlain. Its origins can be traced at least to 1933 when Sir John Simon was Britain's Foreign Secretary.³ The policy was continued in one form or another by succeeding Foreign Secretaries and by Prime Ministers until the outbreak of hostilities over the settlement of the "Polish Question" in 1939. Anthony Eden stated that he had "...occasionally used the word 'appeasement' in a speech or minute for the Foreign Office in the sense of the first meaning given in the Oxford English Dictionary, 'to bring to peace, settle, (strife, etc.)'. It was not until some years later, when the results of the foreign

¹For a brief coverage, including documentation and historical analysis, of the Munich Crisis of 1938 see Peace or Appeasement: Hitler, Chamberlain, and the Munich Crisis edited by Francis L. Lowenheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965).

²For the text of the Anglo-German Declaration see the London Times, October 1, 1938, 14, or Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939 (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1946-1961), Third Series, II, No. 1228 Appendix.

To place the event in context see the enthusiastic reception given to Chamberlain upon his return from Munich as reported in the London Times, October 1, 1938, 7 and 12.

Typical expressions of gratitude are also given in Sir Keith Feiling, Neville Chamberlain (London: MacMillan, 1947), 378-82.

³An interesting and provocative account of the source of appeasement policies in the 1930's is given in A.L. Rowse, Appeasement: A Study in Political Decline, 1933-1939 (New York: Norton, 1961).

policy pursued by Mr. Chamberlain became apparent, that the word was more strongly associated with the last meaning given in the dictionary, 'to pacify, by satisfying demands'."4

Perhaps it is well to digress momentarily to consider the role of words, themselves, in international polity. Traditional instruments available to decision-makers in their pursuit of national objectives include alternatives such as diplomacy, sanctions, and, unfortunately, war. However in a world where traditional values become increasingly less sacrosanct and where the open manifestation of power more often than not is a political liability, an effective tool has been fashioned which, for want of a better term, can be labelled "semantics." The usefulness of "semantics" is demonstrable readily in such instances where "wars" become "police actions" and "blockades" become "quarantines." Whereas these terms relate to objective, legalistic interpretations, a word such as appeasement has become, post Munich, so subjective in nature that, when politically oriented, it elicits an emotional response. Both the objective and the subjective use of semantics can be important political instruments if they are utilized circumspectly.

The topic of Semantic Politics is quite interesting; however, since it is incidental to the main theme of this study, an awareness of its potentialities is presently sufficient.

Appeasement, as used herein, will ascribe to the latter definition in the Oxford English Dictionary: "to pacify, by satisfying demands." Two problems should be recognized with the use of an emotion-laden word like appeasement to describe a political theory. At one extreme lies the danger that the term can be overworked (as evidenced by prolific use in civil rights, civil disturb-

⁴Anthony Eden, Facing the Dictators: the Memoirs of Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), 363.

ances, and labor-management controversies) to the extent that it becomes bathetic. On the other hand, William Henry Chamberlin points out that if it is not recognized for what it is, political and moral concessions may be yielded "under such respectable verbal camouflage as 'flexibility,' 'realism,' and 'making necessary adjustments'".⁵

Few historians will argue that Munich was not the pinnacle of appeasement, but many will contest the base upon which the "pinnacle" rests. The Treaty of Versailles, the League of Nations, reparations, isolation, disarmament, rearmament, the Mukden Incident and Far East Crisis, the remilitarization of the Rhineland, the Italo-Ethiopian Conflict, the Spanish Civil War, the Sino-Japanese Undeclared War, and the annexation of Austria are all undoubtedly part of the base. Although the British invented the foreign policy label of "Appeasement" and have been held accountable for the Munich settlement, they cannot be criticized as being the only proponents of actions intended to pacify the totalitarian powers prior to World War II.

The agreement attained at Munich in 1938 was a commitment to peace in Europe. The price was Czechoslovakian integrity. Appeasement at Munich was manifest. Acts of omission by other nations, while not as obvious as the Munich arrangement, had resulted in policies that also deserve the label applied to Mr. Chamberlain's efforts.

Diplomatic historians, political scientists, statesmen, diplomats, and other representatives from almost every imaginable discipline have devoted much time and effort in attempting to determine the causes of World War II. Investigative emphasis has been predominantly directed toward European events. This preoccupation is a natural phenomenon growing out of strong historical

⁵William Henry Chamberlin, Appeasement: Road To War (New York: Rolton House, 1962), 22-3.

ties of philosophy and culture. However, many events in the Far East have not been given sufficient attention by those who have tried to analyze the gradual collapse of the world peace machinery that was established in vain after the First World War.⁶

The Nine Power Conference of Brussels in 1937 culminates a period of diplomatic failure which has been largely ignored by historians. Treating the Brussels Conference as an isolated event makes it relatively easy either to censure or to praise the conduct of the involved nations. The intention is not to judge the participants and their policies out of context or with the help of hindsight but rather to analyze the events objectively in order to gain an understanding of what happened, where diplomacy failed, and what were the probable effects.

The cardinal moment in a political analysis of the Brussels Conference is not yet apparent--even though more than thirty intervenient years have provided the analyst with ample information and a position of objectivity for a dispassionate critique. Assuming that the interrelationships of nation-states are not discrete events but more precisely a sequence of connected exchanges, some background chronology is essential for analytical perspective.

The decade of the 1930's can fairly be said to have been a significant transitional and educational period in the maturation of American international political thought. A literal description of this era does not indicate so much the evolution of a political philosophy, but rather a groping among theories. Theories were abundant and, regardless of their premises, they all had as their main objective the maintenance of world peace, particularly with regard to any involvement of the United States. Although some of the theories were even-

⁶For a discussion on recent thinking about Far East research see Historians and American Far Eastern Policy compiled by Dorothy Borg (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1966).

tually incorporated into statutes, the active conduct of American Foreign Policy continued to rely on pragmatism. Broadly speaking, two-thirds of the decade was devoted to the establishment of legislative statutes to avoid war in the abstract. The remaining one-third was spent in attempts to circumvent the legislation to deal with war in reality.

The New Deal, ushered in with the inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt as President of the United States on March 4, 1933, promised at least a possibility of a more active role for the United States in world affairs. To be sure, the country at large expected, and was not deceived, that domestic reforms would take priority over international problems. But, after all, the new President had been schooled in Wilsonian, cooperative internationalism. Service as an Assistant Secretary of the Navy in the Wilson Administration and Vice-Presidential candidacy in the 1920 elections, when internationalism was a prime issue, seemed to portend a more participatory United States.⁷

Francis Perkins, who was the Secretary of Labor throughout all of Roosevelt's Administrations, has provided some insight to the President's thoughts about the correct way to approach foreign affairs. In the early months of the first Administration, Perkins discussed plans with Roosevelt for the United States to join the International Labor Organization. Responding favorably, the President, however, cautioned: "Don't try to do this without the full assent and understanding of the members of Congress responsible for foreign policy. Remember how Wilson lost the League of Nations," he continued, "lost the opportunity for the United States to take part in the most important international undertaking ever conceived. He [Wilson] lost it by not getting

⁷Franklin D. Roosevelt, Cordell Hull, and Norman H. Davis are evaluated in a lengthy article as being an exceptionally well-qualified and well-balanced trio to conduct the international affairs of the United States. New York Times [hereafter cited as NYT], May 28, 1933, VI, 15.

Congress to participate."⁸ Later, Roosevelt amplified his thoughts on the congressional role by saying it "is a lesson in patience. You have to give men an opportunity to understand for themselves in their own way. You can't rush them. Not in a democracy."⁹

An auspicious and dramatic indication of a shift in foreign policies was announced to the world by Ambassador-At-Large Norman H. Davis, who was at that time the Chairman of the United States Delegation to the long and futile Geneva General Disarmament Conference. On May 23, 1933, Mr. Davis stated, in part, that "in the event that the states, in conference, determine that a state has been guilty of a breach of the peace in violation of its international obligations and take measures against the violator, then, if we concur in the judgment rendered as to the responsible and guilty party, we will refrain from any action tending to defeat such collective effort which these states may thus make to restore peace."¹⁰ Davis, however, did preface his remarks by saying that the American commitment was contingent upon some form of international agreement towards general disarmament. This step toward collective security, however guarded by technicalities, did demonstrate that the United States was willing to admit some degree of responsibility for world peace.

Concurrent with the Geneva Pledge, the Administration was backing a proposal, initiated during President Herbert Hoover's tenure, to provide legislation that would allow the President to embargo arms shipments to aggressor

⁸ Francis Perkins, The Roosevelt I Knew (New York: Viking Press, 1946), 340.

⁹ Ibid., 343.

¹⁰ U.S. Dept. of State, Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941 [hereafter cited as Peace and War] (Washington: U.S. Govt. P. O., 1943), 188-189.

nations. However, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, under the leadership of Senator Key Pittman, obstinately held out for an embargo impartially applied to both parties in any conflict.¹¹ Not willing to risk much political capital on this issue, the Administration ceased to back the plan and allowed it to die in limbo. The ultimate futility of the Disarmament Conference made it an academic question as to how the United States would substantively discharge the Geneva pledge in view of the Senate defeat. This isolationist triumph over Roosevelt's initial steps in the direction of foreign policy was a portent of future, even more drastic, collective security inhibitions.¹²

The term "isolation" (in various forms) is used repeatedly throughout this paper. It usually connotes a political philosophy or doctrinaire guide for the conduct of foreign affairs. However, it is quite misleading to represent United States participation in world events by a single policy label of "isolationism." Senator William E. Borah succinctly illustrated this problem when he spoke before the Council of Foreign Relations on January 8, 1934:

In matters of trade and commerce we have never been isolationist and never will be. In matters of finance, unfortunately, we have not been isolationist and never will be. When earthquake and famine, or whatever brings human suffering, visit any part of the human race, we have not been isolationists, and never will be.... But in all matters political, in all commitments of any nature or kind, which encroach in the slightest upon the free and unembarrassed action of our people, or which circumscribe their discretion and judgment, we have been free, we have been independent, we have been isolationist.¹³

¹¹It was indeed unfortunate that the leadership of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in such an eventful era passed to Pittman, whose own horizons were generally limited to Nevada, silver, and drinking.

For a critical appraisal of Pittman's life in the Senate see Fred L. Israel, Nevada's Key Pittman (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1963).

¹²Ironically, Roosevelt approved the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's desire for an impartial embargo: Hull later persuaded the President to drop the entire legislation. Evidence presented in Robert A. Divine, The Illusion of Neutrality (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1962), 54.

¹³Quoted in Manfred Jonas, Isolationism in America, 1935-1941 (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1966), 5.

A long period of physical remoteness from Europe and Asia allowed the development of a tradition of independence for the United States in international relations. Twentieth-century technology, aided immensely by World War I, removed the fact of a geographically isolated nation but not the desire to retain the traditional freedom for unilateral action in foreign affairs. The United States emerged from World War I as a de facto world power regardless of many public and private sentiments for a return to the apparent international simplicity of the nineteenth century.

Tacit recognition of an increasing interdependency in the community of nations gradually relegated the concept of isolation from its application to a wide variety of international activities (economics, law, health, politics, etc.) to an almost exclusive association with American political behavior.¹⁴ The political interpretation, which had evolved by the early 1930's, can be briefly described as being an advocacy of unencumbered, unilateral action by the United States in matters pertaining to national security. This definition was flexible enough to attract supporters with political philosophies which incorporated varying degrees of nationalism, pacifism, and stoicism.

The experiences gained from international cooperation during the First World War and the subsequent abortive attempts to find a just and enduring basis for world peace led to a belief by the isolationists of the 1930's that

¹⁴The argument can be made that all international activity is a function of polity, but the distinction is presently not necessary.

There is no intention to imply that international cooperation in "non-political" affairs was always forthcoming. The failure of the World Economic Conference in July 1933 was attributed to Roosevelt's message which essentially refused any cooperation in tying the U.S. dollar to foreign currencies in a plan designed to create international monetary stability. Likewise, an attempt to join the World Court, which had appeared politically feasible in the spring of 1935, was defeated in the Senate with the aid of a phenomenal amount of last minute public protests.

foreign entanglements and war were synonymous terms.¹⁵ Thus whatever unity existed among the isolationists was based, as Professor Manfred Jonas has written, on a "faith in unilateralism and fear of war."¹⁶

With a growing domestic sentiment for aloofness from foreign embroilments and the Senate rejection in the spring of 1933 of legislation to provide for an impartial arms embargo, the Administration was in the precarious position of having to forego any new attempt for cooperation in international politics, especially with the European centered League of Nations. Many diverse organizations (ranging from "peace-at-any-price" societies to reknown legal forums to veterans' associations) were quite prepared to seize the initiative and press for a strict neutrality policy designed to insulate the United States from war. Although these groups started with many different premises, they, almost unanimously, arrived at the same conclusion that the evils of war could be prevented by appropriate legislation.

For any who doubt the power of an articulate minority to influence public opinion and force congressional action, the years 1934-1937 provide an abundance of case studies.

One of the most successful lobbyists in Washington, Dorothy Detzer, was instrumental in instigating a congressional investigation of the munitions industry.¹⁷ Nearly two years of intense and skillful lobbying by Miss Detzer

¹⁵For more complete and detailed coverage of "isolationism" see: Selig Adler, The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth-Century Reaction (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1957); Leroy N. Rieselbach, The Roots of Isolationism: Congressional Voting and Presidential Leadership in Foreign Policy (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966); Robert A. Divine, The Illusion of Neutrality (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1962); and Manfred Jonas, Isolationism In America, 1935-1941 (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1966).

¹⁶Jonas, 23.

¹⁷Pacifist organizations had been demanding such an investigation as early as 1915.

resulted in the introduction of the "investigation" resolution to the Senate on February 8, 1934.¹⁸

Public clamor for an investigation was aroused by publicity to the effect that munitions and banking interests had to a great extent formed a quasi international conspiracy which was largely responsible for World War I.¹⁹

Bowing to popular demands, the Senate created a special committee to investigate the munitions industry.²⁰ Senator Gerald P. Nye, an arch isolationist from North Dakota, was selected, with apparently too little forethought, to head the committee.²¹ Political wisdom dictated an Administration endorsement of the committee's mandate. However, when Senator Nye strayed from the industrial context of the inquiry and began to question the political integrity of American involvement in the War, the Administration began to have second thoughts.

Nye's investigation consumed the better part of two of the critical mid-thirties' years. There were public hearings and private hearings, but always

¹⁸For a personal account of a career dedicated to pacifism see Dorothy Detzer, Appointment on the Hill (New York: Holt, 1948).

Not all of Miss Detzer's logic is as sagacious as her brief statement describing the evolution of war: "War does not spring into life like a burglar into a window. It grows step by evil step--through stupid and short-sighted policies, or through deliberate acts of injustice, or even just the good old sins of omission." (Underlining is mine.) Ibid., 67-8.

¹⁹The works most generally cited as having a catalytic effect on public opinion are: Helmuth C. Engelbrecht and F.C. Hanighen, Merchants of Death (New York, 1934); Gilbert Seldes, Iron, Blood, and Profits: An Exposure of the World-Wide Munitions Racket (New York, 1934); and "Arms and Men," Fortune, IX (March, 1934), 52-7 and 113-26.

²⁰The Senate approved the resolution for the investigation without a single dissenting vote on April 12, 1934.

²¹A tactical blunder was made when Vice-President John Nance Garner and Senator Pittman deviated from the normal Senate custom and allowed the committee to choose its chairman. Although the committee had a majority of Democrats, they selected extreme isolationist Nye, a Republican Senator.

spectacular (if not strictly factual) press releases. The committee's report was based mainly on the testimonies delivered before it in September, 1934, and in January and February, 1936. The investigators produced no conclusive proof of misconduct, but they did have sufficient information to criticize severely many of the business and financial ethics of the industry.²²

Perhaps the most realistic summary of the committee's work was provided by Secretary of State Cordell Hull when he wrote in his memoirs:

The Nye Committee aroused an isolationist sentiment that was to tie the hands of the Administration just at the very time when our hands should have been free to place the weight of our influence in the scales where it would count. It tangled our relations with the very nations whom we should have been morally supporting. It stirred the resentment of other nations with whom we had no quarrels. It confused the minds of our own people as to the real reasons that led us into the First World War. It showed the prospective aggressors in Europe and Asia that our public opinion was pulling a cloak over its head and becoming nationally unconcerned with their designs and that therefore they could proceed with fuller confidence.²³

On the other hand, Dorothy Detzer's opinion was that "no Senate committee ever rendered to the American people a more intelligent or important service." She concluded that "it was the nation's loss that it did not comprehend it."²⁴

Concurrent with and somewhat related to Nye's crusading exploits was the struggle for neutrality legislation. There was no lack of theories on the subjects of neutrality and its parent--the avoidance of war.²⁵ Several schools

²²The results of the Nye committee investigation are contained in U.S. Congress, Senate, Report of the Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions Industry, S. Rept. 944, 74th Cong., 1st & 2nd Sess. (7 vols, Washington: U.S. Govt. P.O., 1935 & 1936).

²³Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (2 vols., New York: Macmillan, 1948), I, 404.

²⁴Detzer, 171.

²⁵Two of the more prominent and provocative theories were presented in: James T. Shotwell, On The Rim Of The Abyss (New York: Macmillan, 1936). Shotwell pictures the nation-states as being in an abyss of concentric circles. The inner circles are positions most threatened by the danger of war. Shotwell

of thought predominated and included a range of proposals from ostrich-like isolation (with and without military protection) to traditional "freedom-of-the-seas" neutrality to active enforcement of peace (either by collective or singular action).²⁶

Basically the lines drawn in 1933--the Administration favoring a discretionary arms embargo resolution and the Senate remaining adamant for impartiality--held firm in 1934. The Chaco War, which embraced a territorial dispute between Bolivia and Paraguay, provided the impetus for compromise neutrality legislation on an ad hoc basis. In essence, the President was authorized to ban the sale of arms to both parties in the conflict if he determined that such action would promote the restoration of peace.

The search for more permanent legislation added a new dimension in the spring of 1934 when Charles Warren advocated that a neutral nation desiring to avoid war would have to exclude both its people and trade from the war theaters. Warren recognized some of the problems associated with his proposal, and he cautioned:

The question then arises, however, whether, under such circumstances, the price of neutrality may not be too high; and whether neutrality, with such added burdens and concessions or surrender of rights, will not be too disagreeable a status for this country to assume. And thus the further question is at once presented: Should not the people of this country be led to give more serious, intense, and con-

argues that the United States position is on the outer rim, and he tries to show how to maintain that position.

Charles A. Beard, The Devil Theory of War (New York: Vanguard, 1936). Beard's theory is that, "War is not the work of a demon. It is our very own work, for which we prepare, wittingly or not, in ways of peace." He argues that most people don't recognize that they are preparing for war in the name of peace.

²⁶There is an abundance of literature advocating the isolationist and interventionist schools of thought. "Freedom-of-the-seas" neutralists, however, were not numerous. Perhaps the most respected publication representing this school is Edwin Borchard and William Potter Lage, Neutrality for the United States (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1940).

tinuous consideration to joining with other nations in all practicable movements to prevent the occurrence of any war which would involve us in so difficult, so burdensome, and so disagreeable (even if not impossible) neutrality?²⁷

Warren was subsequently engaged by the State Department to make a detailed study of the entire question of neutrality legislation. Warren's report quickened Presidential interest in the subject. Thus, with some degree of certainty, legislative action could be projected for the congressional sessions in 1935. Preferring not to have any such legislation, the State Department vacillated over various drafts in an attempt to come up with a workable Administration proposal. Secretary Hull recorded in his memoirs that he "did not want to see legislation which, by telling the world in advance what we would not do in case of war, would prevent our exercising our influence to prevent war; nor legislation which, if war came, would prevent our rendering the least assistance to the world organization; the League of Nations, in its efforts to bring the war to an end."²⁸

The Nye disclosures together with the catalytic effect of the impending Italo-Ethiopian War galvanized isolationist sentiment and forced congressional action. The Administration finally agreed to support a bill which would allow a discretionary arms embargo--a return to the original 1933 position. However, the chances were slim that a measure would be approved permitting such Presidential discretion without strong pressure being exerted on the legislative bodies by the Chief Executive. This, Roosevelt was reluctant to do as it

²⁷Charles Warren, "Troubles of a Neutral," Foreign Affairs, Vol. XII, No. 3 (April, 1934), 394.

It is paradoxical that Charles Warren, an Assistant Attorney General under President Wilson and an ardent internationalist, became the chief architect of neutrality legislation.

²⁸Hull, I, 406.

might have endangered the prospects for passage of several domestic bills which he considered vital.²⁹

A compromise solution was finally worked out which gave a sop to the Administration in the form of a temporary life of six months for the mandatory arms embargo section of the bill. The first Neutrality Act became law with the President's signature on August 31, 1935, and this was the moment that Roosevelt chose to speak out. In a release announcing approval of the legislation, President Roosevelt stated that: "History is filled with unforeseeable situations that call for some flexibility of action. It is conceivable that situations may arise in which the wholly inflexible provisions of Section I of this act [mandatory embargo] might have exactly the opposite effect from that which was intended. In other words, the inflexible provisions might drag us into war instead of keeping us out."³⁰

Neutrality legislation received its baptismal fire with the outbreak of active hostilities in Ethiopia on October 3, 1935. In this instance the United States acted with an alacrity that satisfied even the staunchest isolationists.

Prior to departing the Capitol for an extended fishing trip, the President, anticipating the outbreak of open warfare, had signed (September 25) an undated draft neutrality proclamation. Since no declarations of war had been made, Roosevelt sent a message to Hull on October 4: "If, when you receive this, you have any official confirmation of Italian invasion and of battles and casualties well within the Ethiopian border, it seems to me that this

²⁹For Hull's objections to the impartial embargo plan and a proposal for Roosevelt to come out publicly in favor of the Administration's proposed discretionary embargo, see Hull, I, 411-15.

³⁰Peace and War, 272.

This was a remarkably politic statement that could not help but look good to future analysts.

constitutes war within the intent of the statute and should be proclaimed as such by me."³¹ Hull responded affirmatively but added some additional considerations of whether or not a United States proclamation would undermine collective action by the League of Nations. President Roosevelt decided that the announcement should be released "immediately in view of the undoubted state of war and without waiting for League action."³²

But neither the American proclamation of neutrality nor the subsequent abortive attempt by the League of Nations to impose economic sanctions had any real success in curbing Mussolini's imperialistic ambitions. However, what did become apparent was that all trade, especially in strategic materials, not merely arms and munitions, was of vital importance to a nation's war-making capability.

Therefore, when Congress convened in January 1936, the prospects for enlarging the scope of neutrality to include broader trade restrictions were favorable. Unfortunately, an impasse was soon reached between the isolationists, who favored mandatory restrictions, and those who backed the Administration's desire for discretionary powers. Time necessitated a solution, and this was achieved by a compromise which extended the 1935 Act (with three inconsequential amendments) until May 1, 1937.

Worthy of note is a statement, by Representative Melvin J. Mass of Minnesota, made during the neutrality debates in Congress. Referring to the proposed legislation, Mass declared, "This is the most cruel, most un-American

³¹Hull, I, 428.

Roosevelt's enthusiasm for declaring neutrality in this instance was prompted largely by the circumstances: Italy would be hurt relatively more than Ethiopia by a neutral United States. Roosevelt's eagerness is also in marked contrast to his later action in the Sino-Japanese Undeclared War.

³²Ibid., I, 430.

thing I have ever seen or heard in this house."³³ He continued, with an amazing accuracy (in retrospect), to indict the direction in which he predicted American foreign policy was heading: "While for a time we may escape involvement in foreign wars, the ultimate outcome will be that a few powerful, militaristic nations, unchecked by anything, will gradually create a situation of world-wide conquest, and the time will come when we alone will be left in the way of their complete world dominance. As surely as we take this attitude of smug indifference now, we ourselves will then become the object of attack and invasion."³⁴

Roosevelt's campaign for reelection did not portend any dramatic changes for a more active leadership in world events. In fact, public pronouncements were remarkable for their ambivalence towards foreign affairs--"political finesse" may be a better term to describe the studied, not too committal statements.

The 1936 Democratic Party Platform reflected not the suggestions made by Secretary Hull for executive discretion, but actually endorsed Republican Senator Nye's isolationist views. In part, the platform stated: "We shall continue to observe a true neutrality in the disputes of others; to be prepared resolutely to resist aggression against ourselves; to work for peace and to take the profits out of war; to guard against being drawn by political commitments, international banking, or private trading, into any war which may develop anywhere."³⁵

After the seemingly strong stand taken in the Party Platform, political analysts were given second thoughts by a major campaign address, devoted

³³U.S. Congress, House, Congressional Record, 74th Cong. 2nd Sess., Vol. 80, Part 2 (January 30 - February 18, 1937), 2246.

³⁴Ibid., 2246.

³⁵NYT, June 26, 1936, 13.

entirely to foreign affairs, delivered by the President in Chautauqua, New York. Roosevelt stated that:

We are not isolationists except insofar as we seek to isolate ourselves completely from war. Yet we must remember that so long as war exists on earth there will be some danger that even the nation which most ardently desires peace may be drawn into war.³⁶

After several graphic paragraphs on the horrors of war and the evils of profiteering, he continued:

No matter how well we are supported by neutrality legislation, we must remember that no laws can be provided to cover every contingency, for it is impossible to imagine how every future event may shape itself. In spite of every possible forethought, international relations involve of necessity a vast uncharted area. In that area safe sailing will depend on the knowledge and the experience and the wisdom of those who direct our foreign policy. Peace will depend on their day-to-day decisions.³⁷

Significantly, while paying lip service to isolationism, Roosevelt hinted that there were definite limits to the philosophy of conducting the affairs of state by statute. Although this speech did not openly advocate international cooperation, it did reveal the President's desire for a pragmatic approach to foreign affairs, which could lead easily (and eventually did) to internationalism.

Almost as if to prove Roosevelt's implicit hypotheses, the old "ad hoc" horse had to be dragged out of the legislative stable in response to the alarms sounded by the Spanish Civil War. Much to the chagrin of interested Washington, the Neutrality Act of 1936 was found to be not applicable to civil wars. Stopgap legislation in the form of a joint resolution to embargo shipments of arms, munitions, and implements of war to either side in the Spanish Conflict was enacted with virtually no opposition on January 8, 1937.

³⁶Peace and War, 326.

³⁷Ibid., 328.

As Roosevelt's first administration drew to a close, the theories of neutrality and isolation were nominally the guiding precepts for the conduct of foreign policies. In actual practice, however, political response to the three wars (Chaco, Italo-Ethiopian, and Spanish) was determined on a case basis.

American neutrality in both the Chaco War and the Spanish Civil War was effectively proclaimed by legislation that was applicable only to the specific conflict. To be sure, the 1935 Neutrality Act had been enacted by Congress before the recognized outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian War on October 3, 1935. However, passage of the act remained in doubt until Secretary Hull reluctantly recommended on August 29 that the President approve the compromise bill. Hull later recorded in his memoirs that one of the reasons he finally favored acceptance of the Neutrality Act was that "the nature of the war to which the joint resolution would undoubtedly apply was already apparent."³⁸ He also realized that "the application of the neutrality resolution, in this case, even though it imposed an embargo on both belligerents, could not but affect the aggressor, Italy, far more adversely than the victim, Ethiopia."³⁹ Thus the impetus of the coming hostilities was influential in establishing the neutrality legislation of 1935.

Although there was much emphasis on the merits of neutrality statutes by the advocates of isolationism, there was, in fact, no instance involving the vital questions of war and peace where the conduct of state had been dictated solely by "a priori" statutes.

³⁸Hull, I, 414.

³⁹Ibid.

Franklin D. Roosevelt began his second term as President of the United States with a vast reservoir of political capital and apparent popularity.⁴⁰ The expected emphasis on permanent neutrality legislation, however, did not materialize, and, in fact, the Administration superficially divorced itself from the legislative struggle.

The reason for the divorce, wrote Cordell Hull, was that the Administration believed that a more flexible act could be obtained from Congress without a hard-sell approach.⁴¹ Senator Tom Connally, using a more poignant rationale, maintained that Roosevelt could not afford an intimate involvement in a neutrality battle because of a personally more important objective--increasing the number of justices of the Supreme Court.⁴²

Hammered out on the floors of Congress, tacitly approved by the Administration, and generally welcomed by a naive public, the permanent legislation designed to keep America aloof from the evils of war became law on May 1, 1937. The Nye isolationists feared that too much discretion remained in the Chief Executive's hands and the Stimson-Davis-Hull internationalists believed that too little was retained. Mandatory features of the Act, to be implemented when the President determined that a state-of-war existed, were an embargo on arms, a prohibition on travel on belligerent ships, and a ban on loans to belligerents. The major discretionary feature was that the President was empowered to place all non-arms trade with belligerents under a formula

⁴⁰Roosevelt was reelected by an overwhelming landslide of votes: over eleven million in popular plurality, 523 to 8 ratio of electoral votes, and he carried every state except Maine and Vermont.

⁴¹Hull, I, 506.

⁴²Tom Connally and Alfred Steinberg, My Name Is Tom Connally (New York: Crowell, 1954), 223.

popularly known as the "cash-and-carry" plan.⁴³ Thus, by the middle of 1937, American Foreign Policy, with specific regard to national peace and international war, had become permanently subject to statutory limitations.

The complexity of the neutrality concept might be better appreciated by reference to a brief analogy. Charles Warren provided a succinct description of the "distinctly uncomfortable and precarious position" of the neutral United States in international polity:

In a neighborhood of highly inflammable buildings, to rely on the supposedly fireproof quality of one's own house, and to make no effort to prevent a conflagration starting, is a dangerous means of trying to "play safe." If, however, we are determined to sit on the fence, surrounded by tanks of gasoline, and to watch the match being scratched without taking any part in trying to prevent it, then we ought to make pretty certain beforehand, not only that the house into which we are going to retire is fireproof, but also that the atmosphere will be such that we can comfortably live in the house while the neighborhood is ablaze.⁴⁴

The neutrality question, though quite important, was not the issue that was absorbing the attention of the country for the first six months of 1937. President Roosevelt was concentrating on domestic problems and consequently was divesting his political capital at an enormous rate in his ill-fated attempt to "pack" the Supreme Court.⁴⁵ By the end of June 1937 national attention was focused on the court fight. Internationally, the general public was content to rest behind the false shield of neutrality.

⁴³Briefly, this plan required that title to all goods be transferred to the receiver prior to shipment from the United States. This proposal was initially formulated in Barnard M. Baruch, "Neutrality," Current History, Vol. XLIV (June 1936).

⁴⁴Charles Warren, "Congress and Neutrality," Neutrality and Collective Security (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1936), 153.

⁴⁵For a concise summary of the "court packing" battle see James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956), 291-315.

A crucial test of American Foreign Policy was about to begin with a President whose self-confidence was receiving a damaging blow from what would later be called his most decisive defeat in domestic legislation, and a vast segment of the country deluded by an articulate and vociferous isolationist minority into thinking that Foreign Affairs was truly AN UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITY.

II

MARCO POLO TO GENEVA: THE DEMISE
OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY

Speaking before the Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia on July 7, 1937, Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles said:

"...If war breaks out without this hemisphere, no matter how free from involvement we may remain, we cannot stay clear of its consequences...we must play our part, and our full part, in grappling with the disease which afflicts mankind, before it is too late.... We can but express the anxious hope that the sands in the hourglass have not yet run out.¹ That very night time ran out at the Marco Polo Bridge, near Loukouchiao (Wanping) about nine miles southwest of Peiping. Responsibility for the Marco Polo Bridge Incident has never been fixed, and it is of minor importance in itself. Perhaps the most pertinent comment was made by the United States Ambassador to China, Nelson T. Johnson. He wrote that he did not believe the incident was initiated by either the Japanese Government or Army, but that the question of responsibility was insignificant compared with the use that the Japanese were now apparently going to make of it.²

¹The complete text of Mr. Welles' address, entitled "Present Aspects of World Peace" is given in Documents on International Affairs, 1937 edited by Stephen Heald [hereafter cited as DIA 1937] (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1939), 563-69.

²U.S. Dept. of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1937 [hereafter cited as FR 1937] (5 vols., Washington: U.S. Govt. P.O., 1954), III, 170.

J. W. Ballantine, "Mukden to Pearl Harbor: the Foreign Policies of Japan," Foreign Affairs, Vol. XXVII, No. 4 (July 1949), 654, provides a more analytical approach to the "incident" by saying: "...It was a natural consequence of [Japan's] fixed national policy calling for establishment of a solid footing on the continent."

Excellent coverage of the 1937 Sino-Japanese Undeclared War can be found in E. G. Hubbard, "The Far East" in the Survey of International Affairs, 1937

On July 12, the State Department received information from both Chinese and Japanese government officials on the situation in China, and, in turn, expressed official concern that the conflict was a blow to world peace.³

A brief announcement of these diplomatic exchanges was Washington's first public comment concerning the hostilities. The text of the press release, a separate statement emphasizing independent and parallel action, and an appeal for "continuous and frank exchange of information" were all telegraphed to Ambassador Robert Bingham in the United Kingdom for the information of the British Foreign Office.⁴ This communication was the first Washington-London exchange on the Undeclared War and is significant only in that it reiterated and gave emphasis to Washington's desire for separate but parallel action.

Excluding China and Japan, the powers most noticeably interested in this "Far Eastern Crisis" were the United States and Great Britain. The tone for Anglo-American cooperation had been set in an informal exchange of ideas on foreign policy one month prior to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese Undeclared War.⁵ Prime Minister Chamberlain saw that the basis for Europe's troubles was fear of German aggression. He believed that some form of collaboration between the United States and the United Kingdom was required to restore the world's confidence and avert the current menace. Chamberlain saw that there was a very real possibility that Britain might be confronted simultaneously with hostilities in Europe and the Far East, and that any move

(London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1938); and Dorothy Borg, The United States and the Far East Crisis of 1933-1938 (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964).

³FR 1937, III, 148.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Hull, I, 531-33.

toward an Anglo-American-Japanese detente would be beneficial. In the meantime, the greatest single contribution, thought the Prime Minister, that the United States could make would be to amend the neutrality legislation to distinguish between victim and aggressor.

Secretary of State Cordell Hull's response stressed economic aspects as a means to advance welfare and thereby ease political tensions. More importantly, Hull set policy guidelines when he referred to establishing a restraining influence in the Far East: "We believe that consultation between and among the powers most interested, followed by procedure on parallel lines and concurrently, tends to promote the effectiveness of such efforts."⁶ Hull went on to reaffirm support for the principles listed in Article I of the Nine Power Treaty of Washington, 1922, and to hint at future political agreements with moral precepts similar to ones then in existence.⁷

The first attempt to establish a united front opposed to the hostilities in northern China ended in failure. Britain and France were prepared to urge restraint and to hint at either mediation or an offer of good offices in both Tokyo and Nanking. The United States was asked by Britain if she would be willing to cooperate in the joint approach.⁸ With Presidential approval,

⁶Ibid., I, 533.

⁷Article I of the Nine Power Treaty of Washington, 1922. "The Contracting Powers, other than China, agree: (1) To respect the sovereignty, the independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of China; (2) To provide the fullest and most unembarrassed opportunity to China to develop and maintain for herself an effective and stable government; (3) To use their influence for the purpose of effectually establishing and maintaining the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations throughout the territory of China; (4) To refrain from taking advantage of conditions in China in order to seek special rights or privileges which would abridge the rights of subjects or citizens of friendly States, and from countenancing action inimical to the security of such States."

It is interesting to note the choice of the word "respect" in Item No. (1), and to speculate whether the course of history would have been different had the Powers agreed to "guarantee" the sovereignty, independence, etc.

⁸FR 1937, III, 158-59.

the American reply endorsed the plan for implementation by the British. However, in declining the proposal, the United States said that separate action had already been taken.⁹ Acquiescing to Hull's suggestion, the British dropped the plan and instructed their representatives to act independently and not make the representation on an Anglo-French basis.¹⁰ Although this initial diplomatic maneuver was not necessarily an ambitious one, it did hold the prospect of expressing collective concern--if not security.

There was also a difference of opinion between British and American officials in Japan as to what would be the best course of action. James Dodds, British Charge'd'Affaires, thought that direct representations might be resented, but that inquiring whether the Western governments could be of help would not hurt. Joseph C. Grew, the American Ambassador, reported that he could see no reason why the United States should take any action.¹¹

The Japanese Ambassador in Washington was informed by Secretary Hull on the night of July 13, that the United States "would confine its interests and utterances to phrases entirely within the range of its impartial, friendly attitude toward all alike; that in any event whatever it might now say... would stop entirely short of any question or phase of mediation."¹² During

⁹ Ibid., III, 160.

¹⁰ Ibid., III, 164.

¹¹ Joseph C. Grew, Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904-1945 (2 vols., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), II, 1040; and FR 1937, III, 157.

¹² U.S. Dept. of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Japan, 1931-1941 [hereafter cited as FRJ 1931-1941] (2 vols., Washington: U.S. Govt. P.O., 1943), II, 321.

the course of the conversation, Hull repeatedly expressed the desire of the United States for peace and the deleterious effects that war would have on the world. At this time there were still conflicting information and a scarcity of facts about the situation in China. The meeting between Hull and the Japanese Ambassador produced more mutual expressions of concern than suggestions that could possibly alleviate the hostilities.

One of the factors that led to diplomatic confusion in the early stages of the conflict was that Japan attempted to negotiate a settlement of the "Incident" with local authorities in North China and not with the central government in Nanking. Agreements for a cessation of hostilities and a withdrawal of troops were approved by the Nanking Government, but political concessions wrought from local officials were totally rejected.¹³ Restricted skirmishes and continuing Sino-Japanese negotiations for several weeks led many foreign observers to believe that prospects for localizing the dispute were favorable. However, in reality both China and Japan were preparing for combat on a much larger scale.

A week after the incident at the Marco Polo Bridge, Ambassador Grew reported from Japan that the situation had not developed enough to permit the formulation of recommendations. He could see no course of action available to the American Government that could be taken to any advantage.¹⁴ The Ambassador emphasized that the Japanese-American relations were better when action relevant to Sino-Japanese matters took the form of preserving American

¹³For correspondence on the "local" agreements see FR 1937, III, 137 et passim.

¹⁴FR 1937, III, 166; and, Grew, II, 1043.

rights in China rather than an endeavor to inhibit Japan's use of force. Therefore, Grew expressed his belief that protests to the Japanese Government should be made only in circumstances where the protest would not aggravate the situation; or when American property and citizens' rights were directly involved; or, finally, if humanitarian considerations made it necessary to express official American concern.¹⁵

A literal interpretation of Grew's opinion indicates that he advocated appeasing Japan by the omission of any action when the narrowly defined interests of the United States were not directly involved. This is important to note because the same attitude is expressed periodically by several governments up to and during the Brussels Conference.

The first substantial communication from the French Government was received the night of July 15 in Washington. Yvon Delbos, France's Foreign Minister, expressed his regret that a joint demarche in Tokyo had not been possible. He stated that since neither Great Britain nor the United States seemed willing to intervene actively in the Far East, urging "counsels of moderation" would probably be futile; however, if they were willing to intervene actively, France would "cooperate to the fullest extent possible." Delbos believed that it would be disastrous to the League of Nations if China should call on the League to handle the dispute. The Foreign Minister added that he had remarked in a conversation with the Chinese Ambassador that, "You might as well call on the moon for help as on the League of Nations."¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ FR 1937, III, 174.

There is some confusion whether Delbos made this statement to the Chilean Ambassador or the Chinese Ambassador. The telegram from France, which reported the conversation, stated the "Chilean Ambassador." However, the document, as recorded in FR 1937, indicates that "Chilean" should probably be changed to "Chinese."

The message from Paris also included an appeal for American leadership. This entreaty was phrased with the hope that Washington would initiate action in accordance with the Nine Power Treaty.¹⁷

Throughout the summer and fall of 1937 the Chinese made numerous statements that were prophetic. One pronouncement, in the middle of July, was by the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hsu Mo, to Willys R. Peck, the United States Counselor of Embassy in China. Hsu Mo observed that a policy of isolation from war might seem prudent, but a major conflict in the Far East would entail serious world repercussions, and it would be difficult for the United States to avoid involvement. He wondered whether an effort to obviate such a conflict was not really the wiser course for the United States to pursue.¹⁸ The beginning of a controversy, which was destined to plague Anglo-American relations for many months, was noted when Hsu Mo said that the British Government seemed more active during this crisis than the American Government; thus reversing the situation that had prevailed during the Manchurian Incident.¹⁹

17

Article VII of the Nine Power Treaty of Washington, 1922. "The Contracting Powers agree that, whenever a situation arises which in the opinion of any one of them involves the application of the stipulations of the present Treaty, and renders desirable discussion of such application, there shall be full and frank communication between the Contracting Powers concerned."

18

FR 1937, III, 183.

19

Reference is made to a relatively vigorous policy of "collective condemnation" of Japan advocated by Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson in 1932, and Sir John Simon's failure to provide British cooperation. For a brief account of this controversy see Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper, 1947), 235-39.

By this time (July 16), the cumulative pressures of requests from Britain, France, China, and Japan compelled a clarification of the United States position. Secretary Hull consulted President Franklin D. Roosevelt and reached agreement on a statement of principles. The text was based in part on the Democratic Party Platform of 1932, declarations made at the Montevideo Conference in 1933, and the "Eight Pillars of Peace" program presented by Secretary Hull in 1936 in Buenos Aires.²⁰ For the most part the theme constituted moral advocasies and beliefs of the United States that Hull considered as vital in international relations as the "Ten Commandments" were in personal relations.²¹ The wording was carefully chosen and was couched in broad terms to avoid labelling any nation as a violator of international morality. Copies of the text were communicated to foreign governments with a request for their comments. It was anticipated that the cumulative effect of favorable replies would strengthen and revitalize standards of behavior among nations.

Cordell Hull later recorded in his memoirs that several reasons prompted him to reiterate the principles of moral conduct. The most important motive was to educate Americans and to ease them away from the "slough of isolation into which so many had sunk." He also thought that other nations might be induced to adopt the tenets as the "cornerstone of their foreign policies."

²⁰Text given in Peace and War, 325-26.

Recognition of international responsibility was noted in the statements: "There can be no serious hostilities anywhere in the world which will not one way or another affect the interests or rights or obligations of this country We avoid entering into alliances or entangling commitments but we believe in cooperative effort by peaceful and practicable means in support of the principles hereinbefore stated."

²¹Hull, I, 536.

A third influence was the hope that people, who believed in the principles, might object to or be resistant to aggressive governments. Finally, he felt that if war came, people who were committed to the ideals would "swing back to the right international road."

The issuance of the statement on July 16 was the first major foreign policy step taken by the United States since the beginning of the Sino-Japanese Undeclared War. Regardless of the intentions, this dictum was interpreted by many governments, perhaps too optimistically, as a sign that the United States would take a more active leadership role in stemming the rapidly deteriorating international situation. On the other hand, Under Secretary of State Welles thought that, "Such a communication ...merely convinced the dictators that the United States would limit its interference to words."²²

Replies were eventually received from about sixty nations (including Germany, Italy, and Japan) indicating a willingness to adhere to the principles.²³ The answer sent by the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs,

²²Welles was definitely critical of Hull's statement. He admitted that the principles were largely unassailable, but had been stated before and "frequently in infinitely more eloquent and moving terms." Welles said that what was needed was "some clear indication that the United States was willing to act...and thus save those principles from oblivion." Sumner Welles, Seven Decisions That Shaped History (New York: Harper, 1950), 10-12.

There was not a great amount of mutual admiration between the men occupying the number one and two positions in the State Department. Expressing contempt for Hull's pronouncements in general, Welles stated: "Secretary Hull's discourses to the foreign diplomats whom he received and to his associates...always reminded me irresistably of the story of the Civil War politician whose speeches--more notable for their length than for their content--were once likened to a train with twenty cars from which emerged but a single passenger." Hull's passenger was Trade Agreements--a panacea for the world's problems.

²³Text of the replies are printed in U.S. Dept. of State, The Department of State Press Releases, July 3-December 25, 1937 [hereafter cited as Press Releases] (Washington: U.S. Govt. P.O., 1938), Vol. XVII, 87-107, 121-143,

Maxim Maximovich Litvinov, stressed the "indivisability of peace and of collective security." It also said that the present international situations called for "the most energetic counteractivity on the part of all nations."²⁴ Also of interest was the Portugese reply which decried solving international problems "by means of abstract formulae...the uselessness... [of which] has been seen."²⁵

Perhaps the most succinct commentary on the international situation was made by the British Charge'd'Affaires, James Dodds, to Japan's Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kensuke Horinouchi, on the same day Hull released his statement. Dodds said, "This is a moment for the statesmen and not the soldiers to control."²⁶

Two half-hearted attempts to initiate a political solution met with no success. A British proposal calling for the cessation of all Japanese and Chinese troop movements by July 17 was virtually ignored by both parties.²⁷ Equally futile were feelers put out by the French Government for action in accordance with provisions of the Boxer Protocol, the Covenant of the League of Nations, or the Nine Power Treaty.²⁸

167, 285.

Secretary Hull was irritated when Britain delayed in sending her "reserved" reply. Under Secretary Welles wrote that he suspected Anthony Eden "saw as little of practical value to be gained in signing the proffered pledge as in officially reaffirming the validity of the Beatitudes." Welles, 10.

²⁴Press Releases, 105.

²⁵Ibid., 231.

²⁶FR 1937, III, 188.

²⁷Ibid., III, 187 and 207

This proposal was due to the individual initiative and courageousness of Dodds, who acted without orders from London. His action, subsequently endorsed by his government, is an early example of Britain's willingness to become involved, and Japan's unwillingness to limit hostilities. For the details of this proposal see Grew, II, 1050-51.

²⁸FR 1937, III, 201, 205, 211, 223, 232-33.

Since the outbreak of hostilities in China, press coverage in the United States had been generally limited to factual reporting of events. Facts were hard enough to come by. Many people either considered the incident to be a local outbreak of violence or waited to see what would be Washington's official response. Secretary Hull's formal statement of the United States position, released on July 16 evoked a thoughtful article from Edwin L. James, a prominent political analyst for the New York Times. Included in his analysis of the conflict, James wrote:

It may be taken for granted that as long as the participation of the United States in the situation is limited to exhortations of peace, Tokyo will not alter its intentions because of that. In fact, the Japanese declared yesterday that the North China situation was not an affair concerning the United States. If we do nothing to disturb that analysis of the situation, Tokyo may well judge that it is safe enough to go ahead, so far as Washington is concerned.²⁹

Without actually applying the label, Mr. James was sounding a warning in the early stages of the war that the failure of Washington to act could result in a policy of appeasement by omission.³⁰

Anthony Eden, who was at the time Secretary of Britain's Foreign Office, became convinced that counsels of moderation in Tokyo and Nanking had very little chance of success, especially when they were not presented in consort by London and Washington.³¹ To strengthen the urgings, Eden proposed to

²⁹NYT, July 18, 1937, IV, 3.

³⁰The first mention of appeasement in diplomatic correspondence relative to the Undeclared War was reported by Ambassador Bingham in the record of a conversation with Foreign Secretary Eden on July 19. Bingham wrote that Eden said "he would welcome any suggestion from the American Government as to any action which might tend towards appeasement...separate action by the two Governments...would have at least greater weight than any action by his Government alone." FR 1937, III, 225.

³¹Eden, 602.

Washington that an Anglo American appeal should be sent to the Japanese and Chinese Governments.³² His plan was to ask the Japanese and Chinese: to issue instructions that all further movements of troops be suspended; and, to agree that the United States and Great Britain should put forward suggestions in an attempt to end the deadlock.

While waiting for a reply to his proposal, Eden held several conversations with Robert Bingham, the United States Ambassador in London. Eden emphasized that Britain had created the unfavorable impression in Japan of being more interested than the United States Government in opposing Japanese action in China, and was therefore reluctant to make any further move alone.³³ Bingham's response was that collaboration would be easier to obtain in the Far East than in Europe, but Eden was not sure this was a very encouraging distinction. Bingham also made an interesting, but unofficial, proposal to Eden. In substance, he suggested that Britain ask the United States to join in an embargo on all Japanese trade.³⁴ Ambassador Bingham was acting apparently on his own volition as there is no evidence that he was putting out a feeler for Washington.

Secretary Hull had three main objections to the British proposal for a united approach.³⁵ First, the impression would be created in Tokyo that the

³²For diplomatic correspondence on this proposal see FR 1937, III, 226-29 and 235-36.

³³For the substance of the conversation see Eden, 603-604.

³⁴Ibid.

Bingham reasoned that if some attempt was not made to stop Japanese aggression the outcome would be a total loss for both Great Britain and the United States of large investments in the Far East. Eden showed this proposal to Prime Minister Chamberlain, who then remarked that he hoped it would not go any further as it smacked of sanctions which would antagonize Japan. (This proposal ran counter to Chamberlain's appeasement tendencies and was not pursued.)

³⁵Hull, I, 538.

major Western nations were bringing pressure to bear on Japan. The second was that any joint action should be by all nations having interests in the Far East, or, better yet, by all peaceful nations in the world. The third concern was that any joint action with the British would arouse the fears and animosity of the isolationists. Hull further doubted that action without a show of force, backed by the intention to use it if necessary, would be of any avail. He also correctly thought that neither government was willing to go that far.

Dr. Stanley K. Hornbeck, the Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs for the State Department, gave British Ambassador, Sir Ronald Lindsay, an interim reply to Eden's suggested procedure. Lindsay was told that military elements had taken control of the Japanese Government and that nothing would stop them. Hornbeck also indicated that any joint diplomatic action would only exacerbate the already desperate situation.³⁶

Washington's official rejection of the British proposal indicated that the United States would continue to urge "self restraint" on both the Japanese and Chinese Governments. Furthermore, China and Japan had been invited to suggest any forms of assistance which they believed the United States might usefully render.³⁷ Washington asked London whether similar representations by her might not prove helpful. Eden reluctantly acquiesced and followed this suggestion for lack of any other move to make, but he

³⁶Eden, 603

³⁷Ibid., 604-605; and, FR 1937, III, 236.

That same day, Secretary Hull told Hiroshi Saito, the Japanese Ambassador in Washington, that the United States Government would do anything--short of mediation--that would contribute to composing the differences between Japan and China. Peace and War, 372.

thought that "events made it plainer every day that polite diplomatic appeals were being smoothly disregarded."³⁸

Hull's declination of the British offer resulted in a controversy between Great Britain and the United States over who was doing the most for peace in the Far East. Secretary Hull showed British Ambassador Lindsay several cables he had received that indicated London was implicitly blaming the United States for failure of the British proposal for joint action. The publicity was to the effect that France and Great Britain were willing to pursue the plan if the United States was willing to join them. Regardless of the merit of the charge, Hull took umbrage in it and proceeded to give the British a lesson in diplomatic courtesy.³⁹

There is little doubt that the failure to take more positive action than vocal condemnations and moral urgings of restraint can be construed as an appeasement of Japan's aggression in northern China.⁴⁰ Chiang Kai-shek expressed his feelings in a message to Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and President Roosevelt:

I am sorry that the United States did not cooperate with England in an attempt to avert the present crisis which could have been averted by joint representation to Japan and China. China and the world will long remember Simon's failure

³⁸Eden, 605.

³⁹See also Hull, I, 539, for some caustic remarks addressed to the British Government for publicicly implying that the British project had failed because of a non-cooperative United States.

⁴⁰Raymond Leslie Buell, President of the Foreign Policy Association, held a similar view and publicly declared: "A policy of constant retreating before aggression...means the end of international law and will eventually endanger the defenses of the United States." NYT, July 25, 1937, IV, 4.

to cooperate with the United States in 1931 regarding Manchuria and now Britain will long remember the failure of the United States to cooperate.⁴¹

The many ill feelings and recriminations resulting from the rejection of the British proposal, however, must be remembered in the context of public sentiment in the United States.⁴² Strong sympathy for isolationism restricted the latitude within which the Government could freely pursue its foreign policy objectives in 1937.⁴³

⁴¹FR 1937, III, 460

Chiang Kai-shek routed this communication via Professor J. Lossing Buck, University of Nanking, to Secretary Morgenthau and President Roosevelt. The unusual method of routing and designation of the addressees can be explained partially by the inclusion of some financial matters in the message. However, the State Department was quick to note the impropriety of by-passing established diplomatic channels. Hull responded with an explicit admonishment to Buck and an implicit one to Chiang Kai-shek. For Hull's reply see FR 1937, III, 471.

⁴²For an indication of public sentiment in the United States see above Chapter I and W. H. Shepardson and W. O. Scroggs, The United States in World Affairs: An Account of American Foreign Relations, 1937 (New York: Harper, 1938), especially Chapters III and XI.

A strong reluctance by the American public to cooperate with Britain was indicated when the American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup Poll) reported in the fall of 1937 that 88% of the people questioned rejected the idea of going to war to help Britain if she became involved in the war in China. Hadley Cantril, ed., Public Opinion, 1935-1946 [hereafter cited as Public Opinion] prepared by Mildred Strunk (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1951), 780.

⁴³A typical staunch isolationist/neutralist reaction to the war in China was Congressman Hamilton Fish's public urging that all U.S. troops, ships, and rights in China be withdrawn. NYT, July 22, 1937, 10.

The lack of a clear mandate from the people to become involved in the Sino-Japanese Conflict was also indicated by a survey which showed that the American public was about evenly divided between being sympathetic to China and having no sympathy for either side

Sympathy	Sept. '37	Oct. '37
Neither	55%	40%
China	43%	59%
Japan	2%	1%

However, in the October sample, 63% of the 59% sympathetic to China stated that their sympathy would not deter them from buying Japanese goods. George Gallup and Claude Robinson, "American Institute of Public Opinion--Surveys, 1935-1938," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 2, No. 3 (July 1938), 389.

There was a relative lull in hostilities in northern China at this time, but Chiang Kai-shek stated his belief on July 25 that the only way to avert war between China and Japan would be by cooperative action on the part of the United States and Great Britain along more vigorous lines than had been previously attempted.⁴⁴ The Generalissimo felt that the United States and Great Britain were the only powers in a position to make Japan understand that China would rather fight than make further concessions. After mentioning the moral obligations of the two great powers under the Nine Power Treaty, Chiang went on to say that America's interest in world peace and general concern for the welfare of humanity should dictate an immediate cooperation with the British Government to persuade Japan to avoid an all out war.

Ambassador Grew telegraphed to Washington that in his opinion the action recommended by Chiang Kai-shek would not affect developments favorably, nor, in fact, would any foreign diplomatic representations.⁴⁵

Ambassador Nelson Johnson was "much impressed" with the "logical force" of the Generalissimo's arguments, but the Far Eastern Division of the State Department concurred with Grew, and added that developments could probably be affected only if actions carried some implications of sanctions.⁴⁶

On the night of July 25 fighting resumed along the Tientsin-Peiping rail line. Within a few days the Chinese were defeated, and the Japanese were in control of the Tientsin-Peiping region.

⁴⁴FR 1937, III, 257.

⁴⁵Ibid., III, 280; and, Grew, 1068.

⁴⁶FR 1937, III, 280.

In a memorandum to the Secretary of State, Dr. Hornbeck wrote: "Nothing short of a definite indication on the part of one or more of the great foreign powers that it would be prepared to throw some type of force into the equation would appreciably affect the play of force (forces) which is now taking place on the Chinese-Japanese diplomatic and military battlefield."

In view of the increasing hostilities, Eden renewed his July 20 proposal for a joint Anglo-American approach to the Japanese and Chinese Governments.⁴⁷ This offer met with no more success than the original one and the attempt was dropped. Again a course of action had been proposed, which might have affected subsequent developments, but it could not be implemented because of the fear of the consequences.

By the end of July the Japanese were consolidating their position in North China, and the Chinese were preparing to resist Japanese aggression indefinitely.⁴⁸ The Western Powers were hoping but not expecting that the hostilities would be confined to the North China region. When asked by Secretary Hull if he thought that the fighting would continue and spread, Dr. Hornbeck replied in the affirmative on both counts.⁴⁹

Early in August, prior to the outbreak of hostilities in the Shanghai region, London and Washington considered various methods of making an offer of good offices to Tokyo and Nanking. The original plan was sponsored by the British but the method finally agreed upon came from recommendations made by Ambassador Grew.⁵⁰ He could not "conscientiously recommend against a final effort by the American and British Governments in offering their good offices...." Grew thought the Japanese should be approached separately, orally, in an informal manner, with as little publicity as possible, and from

⁴⁷ Ibid., III, 286. See also footnote 32 above.

⁴⁸ Chiang Kai-shek announced on July 29 that "Henceforth absolutely no local settlement will be possible." The Undeclared War now had become a matter of China's national survival. FR 1937, III, 298-99.

⁴⁹ Ibid., III, 310.

⁵⁰ Ibid., III, 340-41 (for more information on this proposal see also 319, 327-29, 339, 350-51, 353, 372-73).

a non-intervention attitude. He also stated that he should like to feel "that history will regard the record of American action in this most critical and pregnant period in Far Eastern affairs as exhaustive, unstintedly helpful and impartially correct." However, events at Shanghai soon outran the chances for success of the offer of good offices and the proposal was not pursued.

On August 13 fighting began at Shanghai and the danger to international interests became more apparent. Ambassador Johnson had reported to Washington that a proposal for pacifying Shanghai had been discussed favorably in collaboration with the Ambassadors from Britain, France, Italy, and Germany. Johnson had recommended that the United States cooperate in this effort; however, the consuls in Shanghai soon reported to Nanking that under the existing circumstances the plan was "impractical" and was therefore not being undertaken.⁵¹

The diplomatic initiative was again seized by the British. They suggested that both China and Japan withdraw their armed forces from the Shanghai area, and the protection of Japanese nationals in the area would then be undertaken by the Western Powers. France was willing to cooperate, but the United States refused. In rejecting the British proposal the United States categorically stated: "It should not be expected that this Government would be favorably inclined toward any project envisaging military or police responsibilities over and above those which relate to the already existing missions... now present in China."⁵² The reply to the British plan was preceded by a press release on August 17 that also emphasized that the "question of force

⁵¹Ibid., III, 419-20 and 445-46.

⁵²Ibid., III, 449-50.

was entirely out of mind."⁵³ Statements of this nature could hardly fail to encourage an aggressive and determined country like Japan. At a minimum, such declarations provided some latitude within which the Japanese could feel free to pursue their political and military objectives.

The battle for Shanghai, precipitated by the shooting of a Japanese naval officer and a seaman at the Hungjao airport, soon grew to full-scale combat. The increased scope of hostilities added pressure on President Roosevelt to make a decision whether or not to invoke the Neutrality Act. Senator Nye, speaking for the isolationists, called for an immediate declaration of neutrality and evacuation of all American interests from Shanghai.⁵⁴ Senator Pittman, adopting the Administration's view, urged delay in proclaiming neutrality.⁵⁵

Secretary Hull outlined, during an August 17 press conference, the attitude taken by the Washington Government. He explained that the position taken was between two extreme viewpoints: "One is the view of extreme internationalism, which rests upon the idea of political commitments. We keep entirely away from that in our thoughts and views and policies, just as we seek, on the other hand, to keep entirely away from the extreme nationalists who would tell all Americans that they must stay here at home...."⁵⁶ The

⁵³FRJ 1931-1941, I, 349-53.

On the floor of the Senate, J. Hamilton Lewis, a Senator from Illinois, demanded that the United States refuse to cooperate with Great Britain. NYT, August 17, 1937, 3.

⁵⁴NYT, August 15, 1937, 29.

Senator William E. Borah, former Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a long-time isolationist, parochially advocated adoption of any policy to keep out of the conflict: "The world seems determined to commit suicide by more wars and more armaments and more taxes.... I think we can longest preserve our civilization by staying out of it." Ibid., 29.

⁵⁵NYT, August 15, 1937, 1.

⁵⁶Hull, I, 540.

Secretary of State also took advantage of the press conference to forestall charges that American citizens were being abandoned by their government. He announced that 1,200 marines were being shipped from San Diego to Shanghai to provide protection for American interests.⁵⁷

The problem of American interests in Shanghai occasioned some sharp policy debates in the August cabinet meetings. The China situation, explained Hull, was very complicated. To withdraw in an orderly manner in agreement with other nations would be given one interpretation in Tokyo, but the Japanese would consider a "scuttling departure" to be a signal indicating a complete retreat by America from the Pacific.⁵⁸ When the Vice President, John Nance Garner, objected that the United States was risking involvement in a war for the sake of business, Secretary Hull said that ultimately all major powers should withdraw from China and that he planned, if necessary, to assume the lead in doing so.⁵⁹ President Roosevelt ended the discussion by saying that American policies were based "on the hope of a Japanese disaster,

⁵⁷FR 1937, III, 430; and, Hull, I, 540.

Provisions included in the Boxer Protocol of 1901 permitted the stationing of foreign troops in the Peiping-Tientsin area for the purpose of maintaining the lines of communication to the sea. The number of troops was generally limited to a few hundred for each foreign power, but, by the start of the Sino-Japanese Conflict, Japan had expanded her "peace-keeping" forces to about 6,000 troops. United States forces numbered 500 at Peiping, 700 at Tientsin, and approximately another 1,000 at Shanghai in the International Settlement.

⁵⁸John Morton Blum, From the Morgenthau Diaries: Years of Crisis, 1928-1938/hereafter cited as Years of Crisis/ (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), 480.

⁵⁹Ibid., 481.

A public opinion survey indicated that 54% of the people questioned were in favor of withdrawing all troops from China to keep from getting involved in the fighting. Leaving troops in China to protect American citizens was advocated by 46%. Cantril, Public Opinion, 774.

which could be produced by a rise in the strength of Russia and China, and a revolt on the part of the Japanese population against militarism."⁶⁰

Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes summarized the situation by saying that it was the "old case of not doing something when it can be done and then when a crisis arises deciding it can't be done. But there isn't any more doubt," continued Ickes, "than there ever has been that the President desires peace above everything else."⁶¹ After the cabinet meeting, Ickes wrote in his diary that Hull seemed obsessed with the notion that if we did certain things or refrained from doing certain things the Japanese would "insult us;" Hull's attitude toward Japan, Ickes thought, seemed entirely different from his view of other countries.⁶²

Thus by the middle of August the Administration found itself in the increasingly uncomfortable position of witnessing a de facto, even if not de jure, war in the Far East. Foreign Policy direction, at least at the Chief Executive's level, was being based on the tenuous hope for a "Japanese

⁶⁰Blum, Years of Crisis, 481.

The hope for a disaster was predicated on underestimations of the strength of Japan's economy and nationalistic spirit. Many observers erroneously believed that Japan's economy could not support a major war effort without risking a domestic revolt. Ambassador Grew and Sir Robert Craigie, Britain's Ambassador to Japan, thought that if the moderate elements in the Japanese Government were encouraged they might be able to wrest control from the militarists and return Japan to more peaceful days. This also was proved to be wishful thinking. Some diplomatic correspondence on Grew's and Craigie's views is presented in FR 1937, III, 48-52, 74-75, 402, 486.

⁶¹Harold L. Ickes, The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 [Vol. II of The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes] (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 193.

⁶²Ibid., 186.

The question of "face" was very important to the Japanese. The Japanese Ambassador to France, Yotaro Sugimura, stated that as a matter of principle Japan's position could not be defended, but, he stated, "We must remember that as one traveled eastward from Europe principle became less important and prestige became more and more important." FR 1937, III, 326.

disaster." Parallel and independent diplomatic reaction (as opposed to action) was being faithfully practiced; in fact, the most clearcut and well-adhered-to decision to date had been the commitment to avoid any entangling alliances.

A particularly embarrassing point for the Administration was the unused Neutrality Act. Unofficial but very real sympathy for China's cause was held in Washington. Unfortunately the Neutrality Act, designed for a European war, favored a maritime power such as Japan. Roosevelt did not want to prejudice unduly China's capability to resist Japan's aggression, and he therefore was refusing to invoke the Act despite some public outcry for neutrality. In response to a question at an August 17 press conference about the invocation of Neutrality, Roosevelt said that "things are on a 24-hour basis."⁶³

Toward the end of August the United States took a major diplomatic step by releasing a statement on policy.⁶⁴ Briefly, this pronouncement made the principles of international morality as set forth in the previous statement on July 16 directly applicable to the Far East. The general reaction in diplomatic capitals around the world to Hull's latest initiative was aptly summarized by the Tribune de Geneve: "In reality the United States will intervene in the conflict only so far as its material interests are threatened.... From the point of view of the State Department's last two

⁶³FR 1937, III, 442.

Roosevelt was technically correct in his refusal to declare United States Neutrality. Invocation of the Act depended upon the President finding that a state-of-war existed: neither Japan nor China had actually declared war. However, Roosevelt's action in this regard was in marked contrast to the speed with which he recognized a state-of-war and declared neutrality in the Italo-Ethiopian War and the Spanish Civil War. (War had not been declared by the belligerents in these conflicts either.)

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FRJ 1931-1941, I, 355-57; Press Releases, XVII, 166-67.

initiatives, contrary to the objectives they profess, prove once more that one must not count on the active participation of the United States in the general organization of a collective defense of peace. In short, these ritual manifestations mark a new retreat from the defunct Kellogg-Briand Pact, which had already in American eyes only symbolic, sentimental value."⁶⁵

The day following that on which Hull released his latest plea for international morality the indefatigable British made an "urgent" appeal to Washington for a joint approach to China and Japan to declare Tsingtao a "safety area."⁶⁶ The reply to this request stated that the United States had already acted in this matter and that the Ambassadors had been instructed to cooperate.⁶⁷

Six weeks had passed since the outbreak of hostilities in the undeclared war. Throughout this period there had been a noticeable want of political solidarity among the Western Powers. This lack of a united opposition could only enhance Japan's diplomatic and military position in China. The failure by nations, either collectively or singularly, to take positive action to resolve the conflict was tantamount to an acquiescence in Japanese aggression: "Appeasement by Omission." Paradoxically, however, an editorial in the New York Times stated at this time that it was impossible to interpret Secretary of State Cordell Hull in any other way than that the independence and integrity of China remained a goal of United States diplomacy.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ NYT, August 26, 1937, 2.

⁶⁶ FR 1937, III, 463-64.

⁶⁷ Ibid., III, 475.

⁶⁸ NYT, August 25, 1937, 20.

Another opportunity was presented to end the policy of appeasement toward Japan in the closing days of August. The French Government proposed a united appeal for peace in the Far East, and was prepared to "cooperate in any maneuver...even though it might involve the use of force."⁶⁹ In making this proposal, Yvon Delbos indicated that the Russians would aid any effort if their support was desired; in fact, they had informed him (Delbos) that they would "threaten the Japanese with intervention" if they received approval from either England, France, or the United States. Delbos made an interesting point when he said that Britain, France, and the United States should stop the present war, otherwise there was the possibility that the Far East would become Facist under Japan or Communist under Russia. Delbos also mentioned that China was ready to appeal to the League of Nations. These provocative comments, made by France's Foreign Minister, triggered a response from Hull which stated, in part, that "we do not intend to initiate a concert of effort in regard to the Far East...."⁷⁰

The French press editorialized, probably in response to their Government's offer, that, "If the United States decides to take more than passive interest in Chinese affairs there is every reason to believe that she can count upon backing from the European Continent and Great Britain."⁷¹ The article continued to say that there was very little hope that any other country would take the lead in calling a halt to Japanese aggression if the United States remained aloof.

⁶⁹FR 1937, III, 475.

⁷⁰Ibid., III, 485.

⁷¹NYT, August 28, 1937, 4.

The battle for Shanghai continued on into September. The Japanese were looking for a decisive victory. The Chinese were mounting a surprisingly effective resistance, and were looking for friends. The United States was looking for good publicity and ways to avoid involvement. The other interested powers were looking to the United States for leadership that was not forthcoming.

Following close upon the heels of Roosevelt's Supreme Court Defeat, an economic recession began that was to absorb the major share of the President's attention.⁷² The decline in stock market prices was so drastic that it was comparable to any similar period during Hoover's unfortunate years in the White House. Raymond Moley, a former intimate of the President's has vividly described the effect of the recession on Roosevelt: "The crisis that set in during September, 1937, provided, in fact, the most spectacular demonstration of presidential irresolution since the days when Hoover had stood nonplused before some of the same ugly economic realities."⁷³

Concurrent with this latest domestic crisis, government officials were beginning to realize some harsh realities pertinent to foreign affairs. In early September Ambassador Johnson wrote, warning the State Department, that a "too complaisant surrender" of our vested interests now "may precipitate a more violent effort at recovery later."⁷⁴ Secretary Morgenthau had come to the same conclusion through the efforts of his research division in the

⁷² Adding to Roosevelt's discomfiture was a storm of controversy which arose over the nomination of Senator Hugo Black to the Supreme Court to succeed Justice Willis Van Devanter. Opposition to Black because of his New Deal liberalism was bolstered by categorical proof that the Senator had been a member of the Klu Klux Klan--a charge neither confirmed or denied during confirmation hearings.

⁷³ Raymond Moley, After Seven Years (New York: Harper, 1939), 364.

⁷⁴ FR 1937, III, 514.

Treasury Department. Morgenthau predicted accurately the results of a policy of appeasement: "In the long run...a Japanese victory would greatly increase the chance of a general world war, if only by encouraging other facist nations to aggression. Germany was quite prepared to fish in troubled waters; and should Japan achieve success, the probability of a German move against Czechoslovakia would become great."⁷⁵ Perhaps the strongest sentiment was expressed by the Secreatary of the Navy, Claude Swanson, at a cabinet meeting. Swanson said that his staff was of the opinion that if it was considered necessary to put Japan in its place, now was the time to do it while she was so heavily occupied in China.⁷⁶ However, Roosevelt countered that he was a pacifist and had no intention of making a warlike move.⁷⁷

After the Cabinet concluded its meeting, Roosevelt and Ickes continued a discussion on the international situation in the President's office. Ickes told Roosevelt that he thought Hull was becoming altogether too timid. "The President said I [Ickes] was right and that he had about come to the conclusion that he [Roosevelt] would have to take the ball in international relationships from Hull."⁷⁸ Ickes told the President it was his duty, as he was the only one who could mold or lead world public opinion for the democratic ideal.

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Blum, Years of Crisis, 481-82.

⁷⁶Ickes, 211.

Two months later, after the sinking of the USS Panay, Ickes, himself, posed the question: "Certainly war with Japan is inevitable sooner or later, and if we have to fight her, isn't this the best possible time?" Ibid., 274.

⁷⁷Ibid., 211.

Ickes wrote in his diary after the same cabinet meeting his impression of the Secretary of State: "Hull has become so timid that he tries to walk without casting a shadow."

⁷⁸Ickes, 213.

With the war in a temporary stalemate over the battle for Shanghai, national attention was directed momentarily toward actual and possible maritime incidents. Already one sailor had been killed when the USS Augusta was struck by a shell of "unknown origin," and the ocean liner President Hoover had been bombed mistakenly by a Chinese aviator. A source of possible friction with Japan was her establishment of a "blockade" against Chinese shipping: ships sailing under other flags were exempted with the exception that Japan reserved the right to establish the nationality of any vessel. Against this backdrop, a controversy arose (inflamed by isolationist notables and press) over the sailing of the merchant ship Wichita, bound for China with nineteen warplanes on board.⁷⁹

Since the Wichita was owned by the United States, officials in Washington were afraid that an "incident" reminiscent of World War I days might occur if the vessel was stopped by the Japanese patrol that was blockading China's coast. To avert the possibility of a problem, President Roosevelt released the following statement on September 14:

Merchant vessels owned by the Government of the United States will not hereafter, until further notice, be permitted to transport to China or Japan any of the arms, ammunition, or implements of war which were listed in the President's proclamation of May 1, 1937 [Neutrality Act].

Any other merchant vessels, flying the American flag, which attempt to transport any of the listed articles to China or Japan will, until further notice, do so at their own risk.

The question of applying the Neutrality Act remains in statu quo, the Government policy remaining on a 24-hour basis.⁸⁰

⁷⁹The planes were off-loaded at San Pedro, California on September 16, and the Wichita finally made it to China with another cargo. Ultimately the airplanes also arrived in China via Europe on a foreign bottom. For more on the Wichita see NYT, September 15, 1937, 1; September 17, 1937, 4; and October 28, 1937, 4.

⁸⁰Peace and War, 380.

This statement is as close as the President ever came to an outright declaration of neutrality in the Undeclared War. Roosevelt's carefully chosen words represent a remarkably sophisticated and adroit piece of diplomacy. Several objectives were served by the pronouncement. First, the onus was removed from the Government for any maritime incident involving the shipment of arms to the belligerents: this was accomplished without shutting off the trade for those who might think the profit would be worth the risk. Second, and quite important, the isolationists were moderately appeased by the new state of pseudo-neutrality. Third, the rigors and consequences of the full Neutrality Act were avoided, and the President's international hands remained relatively free to operate in the pragmatic manner which he so desired. Finally, both Japan and China were warned subtly that the Government's policy was quite flexible and subject to change on very short notice.

Unfortunately, the President's September 14 announcement had two deleterious side effects. The Chinese Ambassador called upon Secretary Hull to express his Government's disappointment that such a policy, which added to China's difficulties, would be adopted by the United States. "When a friend suddenly pursues a course which injures his friend," stated the Ambassador, "the injured party cannot but feel that there is some deliberate intent."⁸¹ On the other hand, the pronouncement was warmly received in Japan. An editorial in the Japanese newspaper, Asahi, reported: "It is clear that the President's order reveals determination to prevent the United States from becoming involved in the conflict.... We place a favorable interpretation on the President's action. It indicates the folly of the efforts of China at Geneva and elsewhere to secure the assistance of the United States."⁸²

⁸¹Hull tried to mollify the Ambassador by telling him how bad things could have been had the full Neutrality Act been implemented.

⁸²Quoted in Grew, II, 1135.

The interpretation given to fact is more important than the fact itself-- a diplomatic verity. Consequently, if the Japanese chose to evaluate the restrictions on American arms shipments as an acquiescence in their favor, regardless of Roosevelt's motives, the declared state of pseudo-neutrality had indeed become an act of "appeasement by omission."

The Sino-Japanese Conflict entered upon a new phase at about the same time as Americans were discussing the ethics of the Wichita case and Ickes was urging the President to make his voice heard in international affairs. The Chinese Government took the step that had been long anticipated and feared by several other governments--invocation of Article 10, 11, and 17 of the Covenant of the League of Nations coupled with an appeal to the Council to advise upon the appropriate procedures and actions to be taken in accordance with the Articles.⁸³

The League of Nations recognized that any successful action would depend essentially upon participation by the United States. Wary of becoming entangled with the League of Nations, Secretary Hull cabled to Leland Harrison, the United States Minister in Switzerland: "It appears to us an eminently tenable position that some fifty states [League members] should make up their minds and express themselves on a given problem before any one

⁸³In July French Foreign Minister Delbos stated that "he was definitely opposed to an appeal by China to the League of Nations. The League of Nations today was a cipher and the only result of a Chinese appeal would be the cipher would become the shadow of a cipher." FR 1937, IV, 2.

In essence, the three Articles: reminded the League of its obligation to preserve the territorial integrity and political independence of one of its members against aggression; called for appropriate action to safeguard the peace of nations, and required that a non-member (Japan) be invited to accept the obligations of membership, whereupon the sanctions of Article 16 would be applicable, and if the non-member would refuse and resort to war then the provisions of Article 16 would be applied against it.

state, outside of their organization, is asked to commit itself."⁸⁴

The key to United States involvement lay in its membership on the Far Eastern Advisory Committee. This committee had been established early in 1933 in response to the crisis which grew out of the Mukden Incident and Japan's subsequent invasion of Manchuria. The Advisory Committee had remained in being, ostensibly to follow the Far Eastern situation and provide a means for reconsidering the problem. This reconstituted organization met on September 21. One of the first considerations was the establishment of a subcommittee composed of the most interested powers--aimed at the signees of the Nine Power Treaty--to investigate the charges submitted by China.

Leland Harrison was authorized to sit on the League committees in the limited capacity of an observer.

The first several days of the sessions in Geneva embraced a lot of talk but very few decisions. The conclusion was reached by most international observers that no strong verdict against Japan could be possible until there was some indication that the United States would be willing to make a meaningful commitment to some form of collective action. Unanimity was achieved, however, on September 27 with the adoption of a resolution condemning Japanese bombing of open cities in China. The recent slaughter of civilians in air raids on Nanking prompted the declaration that "no excuse can be made for such acts which have aroused horror and indignation throughout the world, and [the Advisory Committee] solemnly condemns them."⁸⁵

To forestall criticism that the United States was restraining the efforts of the League of Nations and to ease the pressures generating a demand for

⁸⁴Hull, I, 543.

⁸⁵Complete text printed in FR 1937, IV, 38.

some statement or reaction from Washington, Hull sent further instructions to Harrison to emphasize the action that the United States already had taken in support of the July 16 and August 23 policy statements. Harrison was also told to be explicit in pointing out that independent and parallel action was favored by America. The Minister was to suggest that other nations might direct their efforts now to go as far or farther than the United States had already gone.⁸⁶

While the League was considering what course to take, the British queried the United States Government about the possibility of joining them in sponsoring some form of economic boycott against Japan. The official British attitude was that they would consider the boycott or any other move likely to curtail the present conflict. The United States reply indicated that such a sanction had been considered but that that was about as far as action would go for the present.⁸⁷

With diplomatic activity quietly centered on London's boycott proposal, the international military and political battlefields were otherwise relatively serene in the last week of September and the first few days of October 1937. The calm, which was more superficial than real, was being punctured sporadically by thought-provoking analysis beamed to the world via the communications media.

In a press conference held on September 24, Chiang Kai-shek accused the United States and the other signatories of violating their obligations under

⁸⁶Hull, I, 543; and, FRJ 1931-1941, I, 373-77.

⁸⁷Some support for a boycott was demonstrated when Roosevelt was shown a long list of items that Japan would no longer permit to be imported so as to conserve her financial resources. Roosevelt wondered if the list might not justify forbidding imports of an equivalent value. He thought that this would have a serious effect on Japan if all other countries should adopt a similar ruling. Ickes, 233.

the Nine Power Treaty. He predicted that eventually the United States would realize the error of its ways and would support China to uphold the principles of international law and justice.⁸⁸

Dr. A. J. de Querredo, from Ecuador, expressed the unspoken sentiment of many small countries: "When the truth strikes in the eyes, we must condemn aggression promptly."⁸⁹ He argued that if the League did not give moral support to China, a large country where several great powers had extensive interests, what hope was left for weaker members of the League.

A meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences resulted in an excellent forum for the expression of views on the international situation. Dr. Raymond Leslie Buell, in an address distinctly critical of the Administration's Far East policy, called for "positive action" in cooperation with other nations. He asserted that the resulting risks would be no greater than those presently existing, and that the effect might end "present world anarchy." He said that it was a "pure delusion" to think that there was safety in continental isolation.⁹⁰ At the same gathering, George Soule, who was the editor of the New Republic and generally regarded as a spokesman for the left, declared: "...any program of positive action involves certain risks, but these risks are not greater than arise out of our present policy; what is more, a policy of positive action promises to put an end to the present world anarchy."⁹¹

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NYT, September 25, 1937, 8.

⁸⁹

NYT, September 30, 1937, 11.

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For a more complete report of Dr. Buell's statements see NYT, October 2, 1937, 9.

⁹¹

Mr. Soules' remarks are covered in greater detail in NYT, October 2, 1937, 9.

The President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, cited the "contemptuous disregard" Japan had for her treaty obligations in China. Dr. Butler continued in his radio address to state that the choice facing mankind was either "the rule of moral principle or world ruin."⁹²

Numerous laments for the fate of the world in a society of anarchistic nation-states were being expressed in the apparent reality of a complete and final collapse of the collective security philosophy for maintenance of world peace. While these prophets of doom waited for the announcement of the "last rites" in Geneva, President Roosevelt was putting the finishing touches on a speech that would jolt the world into thinking that collective security might not only survive, but indeed serve society well.

⁹²Dr. Butler's address is reported in NYT, October 4, 1937, 10.

III

QUARANTINE TO BRUSSELS: HOPE AND DISILLUSIONMENT

A major diplomatic speech, often referred to as a "watershed" in American foreign policy, arose from a proposal initiated jointly by the Tennessee Diplomats: Cordell Hull and Norman H. Davis. Knowing that the President's concern over the economic recession prompted Roosevelt to schedule a cross-country trip for a personal "look-see" at the domestic situation, Hull and Davis suggested the opportunity be used to make a speech promoting international cooperation. Furthermore, they thought, the speech should be given in a large city in the isolationist heart of the country. President Roosevelt responded with enthusiasm to both ideas.

In Chicago on October 5, 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered his famous "Quarantine Speech." The speech said, in part, that:

The peace-loving nations must make a concerted effort in opposition to those violations of treaties and those ignorings of humane instincts which today are creating a state of international anarchy and instability from which there is no escape through mere isolation or neutrality.... It seems to be unfortunately true that the epidemic of world lawlessness is spreading. When an epidemic of physical disease starts to spread, the community approves and joins in a quarantine of the patients in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease.... The will for peace on the part of peace-loving nations must express itself to the end that nations that may be tempted to violate their agreements and the rights of others will desist from such action. There must be positive measures to preserve peace.¹

International reaction to the "Quarantine Speech" followed the lines of the military alliances for World War II. Germany, Italy, and Japan were generally reserved in their comments, but tended to discount that any action would result from the speech. France, China, and Russia were very hopeful

¹Complete text given in FRJ 1931-1941, I, 379-99.

and enthusiastic that the speech was presaging a role of international cooperation for the United States. The British reaction was one of guarded optimism; they were dubious that the speech was a call for action, and feared that it merely expressed an attitude.²

On one hand the British were pessimistic that the United States was now advocating collective action for collective security. After three months of appeals for Anglo-American cooperation, with not much more success than polite diplomatic rebuffs, the London Government was naturally dubious. On the other hand, they remembered a conversation in March 1937 between Ambassador Bingham and Foreign Secretary Eden during which Bingham delivered a personal message from his President: "The Ambassador said it was quite true that President Roosevelt had been contemplating some initiative to attempt to better the present international situation.... President Roosevelt was not only ready but eager to help, that he would be ready to take an initiative if and when we thought the moment right...."³ Perhaps it was on this optimistic note that Prime Minister Chamberlain, addressing a Conservative Party Conference at Scarborough, said that the Quarantine Speech was a "clarion call from the other side of the Atlantic, as welcome as it was timely in its utterances."⁴ Chamberlain went on to pledge the whole-hearted cooperation of the British Government in any concerted effort for the goal of peace.

²See NYT, October 7, 1937, 13-14.

Prince Konoye's eldest son, who was in his senior year at Princeton, interpreted the speech as a "face saving" device for the President. NYT, October 8, 1937, 5.

³Eden, 599.

Bingham told Eden that the time [March 1937] for the initiative was not yet, but that an alert watch should be kept so the right moment was not overlooked.

⁴Extracts from Chamberlain's speech are printed in DIA, 1937, 49.

The initial domestic reaction to Roosevelt's speech is hard to evaluate. On the surface it was generally enthusiastic.⁵ One of the main difficulties in assessing the public response is that there was a lack of official interpretation or clarification of the President's remarks. In a celebrated press interview (the day after the Chicago address) with Ernest K. Lindley the President was extremely vague and non-committal about the intent of his speech. When asked if the speech repudiated neutrality, Roosevelt replied: "Not for a minute. It may be an expansion."⁶

Secretary Morgenthau recorded in his diary that the President was probably not sure himself what he meant to imply by the speech but that he did not, as Roosevelt later explained, have sanctions in mind.⁷ Secretary Hull was surprised at the wording of the "Quarantine Speech" and thought that the effects of it would set back six months the public education campaign towards international cooperation.⁸ Hull later recorded in his memoirs that he thought isolationist reaction to the speech "emboldened the agressor countries, and caused the democracies in Europe to wonder if we could ever be with them in more than words."⁹

⁵ See NYT, October 6, 1937, 17-18, for comments from around the country. Even Senator Borah hailed the speech. In a survey of sixteen editorial opinions from various newspapers: nine responded favorably to the President's call for internationalism; two were definitely hostile; and five were either neutral in opinion or questioned what the significance of the remarks was.

Senator Pittman said that the conflict could be ended in thirty days by establishing an economic quarantine of Japan (NYT, October 7, 1937, 1).

On October 8, the AFL and Transport Workers Union called for boycotts of Japanese goods (NYT, October 8, 1937, 1 and 8).

⁶ Quoted in Samuel I. Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt (New York: Harper, 1952), 167-68.

⁷ Blum, Years of Crisis, 482.

⁸ Hull, I, 545.

⁹ Ibid., I, 546.

The motives behind the "Quarantine Speech" remain a mystery. Roosevelt's secretary, Grace Tully, recalled working with the President on the speech: "From his first words on this evening it was evident that Mr. Roosevelt intended the Chicago speech to be a significant commitment...."¹⁰ When Roosevelt returned to the train after the speech, remembered Miss Tully, "he had the air of having made a profound decision and commitment--and of being glad the step was taken."¹¹

Under Secretary of State Welles has alluded to the possibility that the "Quarantine" idea was the outgrowth of a conversation he had with the President in the early part of the summer of 1937.¹² During the discourse, Roosevelt talked about the possibility of erecting a naval barrier around Japan if she did not cease her policy of conquering the rest of Asia.

Ambassador William Phillips, while on a short leave of absence from his post in Italy, met with President Roosevelt at Hyde Park the day after the Chicago speech. Phillips has reported part of the conversation in his memoirs: "He [Roosevelt] had searched for a word which was not 'sanctions' and had settled upon 'quarantine' as a word indicating a 'drawing away from someone.' However in developing this thought, he indicated to me a willingness to go very far in drawing away...."¹³

And so the speculation about the President's motives continues.

Most historical analysts attribute Roosevelt's subsequent backing away from what appeared to be a strong commitment for positive action to the

¹⁰ Grace Tully, F.D.R., My Boss (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1949), 232.

¹¹ Ibid., 233.

¹² Welles, 8.

Sumner Welles was very enthusiastic about the speech. He later wrote that he was shocked at the lack of support others in the Administration gave to the President in this cause. Ibid., 13.

¹³ William Phillips, Ventures in Diplomacy (Portland: Privately Printed, 1952), 207.

isolationist backlash in response to the speech. The evidence to support overwhelming rejection of international cooperation is tenuous at best.¹⁴

An interesting addendum to the "Quarantine Speech" was the formulation of a world peace plan under the chief sponsorship of Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles.¹⁵ The initial proposal was outlined for the President in a memorandum from Mr. Welles dated October 6, 1937.¹⁶ After several refinements, the plan evolved into two distinct stages. The first stage was to be dramatically introduced, without prior notice, by Roosevelt during Armistice Day ceremonies. At that time, the President would summon all of the foreign diplomatic representatives to the White House. When the diplomats had congregated, he would make an emotional appeal concerning the need to preserve world peace. He also would announce that the United States was prepared to assume a position of leadership in any move to halt the drift into war. All governments would then be asked to agree upon standards of international conduct, means of ensuring conduct, methods to achieve real disarmament, ways to enforce humanitarian rules of warfare, and procedures for all nations to gain equal economic opportunities.

¹⁴Roosevelt fully expected that his speech would provoke an emotional outcry from the isolationists. Expecting a "con" reaction, the President may have given more credence to his pessimistic barometers than to the generally "pro" reaction reported in the press. This theme is expanded and documented in Dorothy Borg, "Notes On Roosevelt's Quarantine Speech," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXXII (September 1957), 405-33.

A survey of thirteen newspaper reactions to the speech indicated that seven generally approved and six had unfavorable reactions. The six included those which deplored the President's ambiguity and apparent lack of candor, and were not necessarily against the principle of involvement, Literary Digest (October 30, 1937), 12.

¹⁵The "plan" is discussed in greater detail in Welles, 15-30.

¹⁶The memorandum is printed in William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation (New York: Harper, 1952), 20-21.

The second stage would be implemented if the nations accepted the Armistice Day proposal. In this phase of the plan the President would invite nine representative nations--mostly smaller ones which were not involved in any of the European or Asiatic controversies--to cooperate with the United States in forming an agenda to cover the major points enumerated in the Armistice Day Address. This assembly of nations would function in Washington and maintain communications throughout the world until satisfactory conclusions were reached.

The main objective of the plan was to convey the message to Germany, Italy, and Japan that America could not passively watch them continue to prepare for world conquest. Another expected benefit would be that nations might be encouraged to resist the three "bandit nations" by an unequivocal indication that the United States would cooperate in an effort to resolve the growing crises. On the tactical side, Welles thought that his proposal might be acceptable to the American public because it avoided international conferences, which had been noted for their lack of accomplishments.

The "peace plan" was well received by President Roosevelt. "He was not only receptive, but particularly enthusiastic."¹⁷ Some insight to Roosevelt's enthusiasm has been provided by Cordell Hull in his memoirs:

Almost before I knew it, I found the President completely embracing this project. The colorful drama to be staged in the White House appealed to him. For several years he had pondered the idea of inviting the heads of the nations of Europe to hold a meeting with him at sea. Around a table aboard a battleship or cruiser he would work out with them a lasting peace.¹⁸

¹⁷ Welles, 22.

¹⁸ Hull, I, 546.

It is perhaps this same philosophy that Roosevelt took to later conferences such as the Yalta Conference.

The cooperative and dramatic spirit of the "Quarantine Speech" can be seen in the "peace plan." Whether or not the President had conceived of similar action when he spoke of a "concerted effort" remains a debatable point.

Secretary of State Cordell Hull was definitely not in favor of the plan. Arguing forcefully, he persuaded the President that it should not be attempted:

At this late stage in 1937, Germany, Japan, and Italy had pushed their rearmament so far that there could be no doubt it was intended for offense, not defense, for conquest, not for peace. It would be fatal to lull the democracies into a feeling of tranquility through a peace congress, at the very moment when their utmost efforts should actually be directed toward arming themselves for self-defense.¹⁹

Almost as if there were coordination with the White House, the very next day after the "Quarantine Speech" appeared in the newspapers, a lengthy article strongly advocating international action came out in the New York Times. The article, authored by one of America's most devoted and respected statesmen--Henry L. Stimson, was the most articulate, stinging, and accurate indictment of the United States policy of appeasing Japan by the omission of positive action that could thwart Japanese aggression in China:

The problem of the preservation of China's peaceful civilization cannot be solved by the armed intervention of the Occident.

But that is very far from saying that the only alternative is inaction or a passive or shameful acquiescence in the wrong that is now being done. The lamentable fact is that today the aggression of Japan is being actively assisted by the efforts of men of our own nation and men of the other great democracy in the world--the British Commonwealth of Nations. It is not only being actively assisted, but our assistance is so effective and predominant that without it even today the aggression would in all probability be promptly checked and cease....

I have heard Theodore Roosevelt say that he put peace above everything except righteousness. Where the two came into conflict he supported righteousness. In our recent efforts to avoid war we have reversed this principle and are trying to put peace above righteousness. We have thereby gone far toward

¹⁹Ibid., I, 547.

killing the influence of our country in the progress of the world. At the same time, instead of protecting, we have endangered our own peace....

Such a policy of amoral drift...will only set back the hands of progress. It will not save us from entanglement. It will even make entanglement more certain. History has already shown us this last fact.²⁰

Chiang Kai-shek also recognized the consequences of appeasement policies and stated that "if signatories to the treaties concerned continue to let justice and law be overrun by Japan keeping up her ruthless invasion of China it will be tantamount to supporting Japan's plan of conquering China."²¹

The League of Nations, searching for a way to save face and maintain the appearance of an international organization with some potency, adopted a proposal initiated by Lord Cranborne--the British delegate to the League. Basically the plan was to pass the responsibility for action to the signatories of the Nine Power Washington Treaty of 1922. Everyone realized that any effective action would depend upon the United States taking a more active role, and the proposal was a thinly veiled scheme to compel involvement of Washington. The Assembly of the League of Nations adopted, by resolution, the two reports prepared by the Subcommittee and forwarded by the Advisory Committee. These reports effectively labelled Japan as a breaker of treaties and a war-maker, and called for a conference of the Nine Power signatories. The Resolution also stated that the Assembly "...expresses its moral support for China, and recommends that Members of the League should refrain from taking any action which might have the effect of weakening China's power of resistance

²⁰Complete text of Stimson's letter to the editor is printed in NYT, October 7, 1937, 12.

If Japan desired to fight a nation that resorted to economic measures to obstruct aggression Stimson was prepared to face the consequences; however, he believed that Japan was not ready to go that far in 1937. Stimson and Bundy, 312.

²¹FR 1937, III, 589.

and thus of increasing her difficulties in the present conflict, and should also consider how far they can individually extend aid to China...."²²

Thus, while the League did not come out strongly for aid to China, it offered some hackhanded help by exhorting the Members to refrain from taking action which would hinder China's resistance.

The results of the League's work were published on October 6, 1937, and on that same day the State Department issued a release that endorsed the League's action. The United States was in "general accord" with the conclusions of the League; and, in the endorsing statement, publicly admitted for the first time that Japan's action in China "is inconsistent with the principles which should govern the relationships between nations and is contrary to the provisions" of the Nine Power and Kellogg-Briand Pacts.²³

At this point the chances looked very good that some sort of international pressure might be put upon Japan to cease her aggressive actions in China. The President had taken a strong stand in his Quarantine Speech and the United States had concurred with the League of Nations.²⁴ The stage was now set for the conference that could possibly have given collective security and international morality new meanings. Instead, decisions for collective appeasement were made that would ultimately lead to a conference that acquiesced in Japan's aggression through a failure to adopt any plan of forthright action.

²²For complete texts of the Reports and the Resolution, see DIA 1937, 686-701.

²³FR 1937, IV, 62.

²⁴Ambassador Grew was very disappointed with the latest United States pronouncements. He thought that the "Quarantine Speech" and the endorsement of the League of Nations Resolution were contrary to the "carefully considered recommendations" sent to Washington by his embassy. "Our primary and fundamental concept," Grew wrote, "was to avoid involvement in the Far Eastern mess; we have chosen the road which might lead directly to involvement." Grew, II, 1166-68.

For a good summary and statements of Grew's recommendations, which amount to a policy of appeasement toward Japan, see FR 1937, III, 591-93.

The same day that the League of Nations passed its Resolution, the British seized the initiative and began to plan for a Nine Power conference. They suggested to the United States that Washington act as the host.²⁵ Outright rejection of the British suggestion was followed by several diplomatic exchanges that resulted in the acceptance of a Washington proposal that Belgium should sponsor the conference in Brussels. The Belgians were not enthusiastic about holding the conference in their country. In fact, the Belgian Ambassador in Japan strongly recommended against a meeting in Brussels. He thought that Belgium's interests in Japan would be injured as nothing would alter the developments in China except force, which would not be forthcoming.²⁶

The wording of the invitations to the conference also presented a diplomatic challenge to the international community. None of the powers were willing to assume the responsibility for any onus that might arise from conference action; hence, the invitations were issued by the Belgium Government at the request of the British Government and with the approval of the American Government.

During this period, both international and national observers were trying to determine what position the United States would take at the conference. The main question, which had remained unanswered, was the significance of the "Quarantine Speech." Norman Davis, who had apparently been in contact with Roosevelt, told several ranking members of the State Department on October 7 that the President was not going to make any further move in foreign affairs until "he hears from the country."²⁷

²⁵FR 1937, IV, 64.

²⁶Ibid., IV, 74.

²⁷Jay Pierrepont Moffat, The Moffat Papers: Selections from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat edited by Nancy H. Hooker (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1956), 155.

Moffat stated that he and Davis differed considerably upon what they hoped the President would hear from the country.

The country was not quiet, but the sentiment was so divided and diverse that anyone with a closed mind could interpret public opinion to be just as he preconceived it. A very influential barometer was the results of a poll of Congressmen conducted by the Philadelphia Inquirer. By a margin of 2½ to 1 the Congressmen contacted were against cooperating with the League of Nations "either in sanctions or active intervention" in the Sino-Japanese Conflict.²⁸ At the other extreme were letters to the editors of newspapers similar to the one that stated: "If aggressor nations can be assured that no united force will be applied against them, then it is a farewell to peace. Italy started a precedent, Japan followed through. Germany and Italy now wait on the sidelines. Their future course depends upon what we, united with other nations, do today. A strong unflinching stand will force their future activities into peaceful channels.... We either face a risk today or a disastrous certainty tomorrow."²⁹

Roosevelt was undoubtedly sensitive to criticism. Evidently he expected more of a negative reaction to his speech than actually appeared. In a letter to Colonel Edward M. House, Roosevelt stated: "I thought, frankly that there would be more criticism and I verily believe that as time goes on we can slowly but surely make people realize that war will be a greater danger to us if we close all the doors and windows than if we go out in the street and use our influence to curb the riot."³⁰

To quiet some of the fears expressed domestically by the isolationists, President Roosevelt made a radio address to the nation on October 12. With

²⁸NYT, October 9, 1937, 2.

²⁹NYT, October 11, 1937, 24.

³⁰Franklin D. Roosevelt, F.D.R.: His Personal Letters, 1928-1945 edited by Elliott Roosevelt (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1950), Vol. III, Part 1, 719.

specific reference to the coming Brussels Conference, he said: "The purpose of this conference will be to seek by agreement a solution of the present situation in China. In efforts to find that solution it is our purpose to cooperate with the other signatories to this Treaty, including China and Japan...America hates war. America hopes for peace. Therefore, America actively engages in the search for peace."³¹

The search for peace had to be conducted quickly as the conference was scheduled to convene on October 30.³² On the same day that the invitations were extended (October 16), the United States appointed Norman Davis as its sole delegate to the conference. Stanley Hornbeck and Jay Pierrepont Moffat, Chief of the State Department's Division of European Affairs, were assigned as advisers to Davis. The delegate and his advisers had only four days to confer in person with Secretary Hull and President Roosevelt before they had to sail for Europe.

Secretary Hull's written instructions to Davis indicated that the principles set forth in the July 16 and August 23 statements should be used as a general guide for participation in the conference. Less emphasis was placed on the President's pronouncements of October 5 and October 12. Included in Hull's guidelines was a directive which effectively constrained the diplomatic options available to Davis: "You will bear in mind also that public opinion in the United States has expressed its most emphatic determination that the United States keep out of war."³³

³¹Text printed in FRJ 1931-1941, I, 400-401.

³²The date was later changed to November 3. The United States had proposed an earlier date (preferably no later than October 22), probably to take advantage of the initially favorable public reaction to the "Quarantine Speech" and to avoid conflicting interest with the special session of Congress called for the middle of November. See FR 1937, IV, 68.

³³FR 1937, IV, 84.

Hull has written in his memoirs that Roosevelt's strategy for the

The President's instructions to Davis also emphasized the importance of public opinion, especially with regard to Anglo-American relations. Roosevelt impressed upon Davis that there were three things to be kept in mind and made clear at every step of the conference.³⁴ First, the United States will not participate in any joint action with the League of Nations. The second was that present policy did not foresee the United States being pushed out in front as the leader in, or suggestor of, future action. Finally, it was important that America should not appear to resemble a "tail to the British kite."

The instructions given to Davis emphasized the reluctance of the Administration to commit itself to an active role in foreign affairs. A strong isolationist sentiment coupled with a domestic crisis and declining popularity were powerful forces compelling Roosevelt to back away from international cooperation, which can be a controversial subject even in normal times. A radical move in foreign policy was almost guaranteed to weaken Roosevelt's political power base. Unity was needed to continue with domestic legislative programs and reforms.

On the personal side, the President could not help being hesitant, if not apprehensive, about implementing a controversial policy after the defeat and criticism he suffered over the "court packing" attempt. Sumner Welles summarized the President's dilemma:

Conference was to call repeatedly upon the Japanese to come to Brussels to negotiate with China. Roosevelt wanted to prolong the Conference and use it as a vehicle to educate public opinion and to bring all possible moral pressure to bear on Japan. Hull, I, 522.

³⁴FR 1937, IV, 85.

The importance of educating the public to the very real danger of policies that would result in war was emphasized in a conversation between Roosevelt and British historian H.G. Wells on October 21. The discussion included a forecast of when World War II would begin. Wells predicted 1940, and Roosevelt thought that it would commence in 1941. Both agreed that there was very little time remaining to educate the public to avert the war. Ickes, 232.

...The contest over his attempt to reform the Supreme Court had later provoked a schism within the Democratic Party as deep as it was bitter. The struggle that ensued undeniably alienated from Franklin Roosevelt some of the immense mass support that had been so clearly shown the preceding November.

Under the circumstances, the President was unwilling throughout that critical spring and summer of 1937 to make any new move that might provoke further public controversy....³⁵

By October, Roosevelt was again under fire for a "court" related problem. A violent storm of criticism had broken out over the nomination of former Klux Klan member, Hugo Black, to the Supreme Court. Although Black was finally exonerated and his nomination approved, the result for the Administration was the loss of some political consensus.³⁶

However, the greatest obstacle preventing new ventures in international cooperation was the President's preoccupation with the domestic recession. One of the stock market indices showed a drop of about 30 points from August to October to a level below the 1931 average index. And on October 18, the market suffered its worst decline since September 24, 1931. The recession began to look as if it was the prelude to a full-scale depression. Secretary of the Interior Ickes had the impression that the President was disturbed by the worsening business and economic situation to the point of being confused about what, if any, action to take.³⁷ Likewise, Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau thought that the President was indecisive at a time when quick action was imperative.³⁸

³⁵Welles, 7-8.

³⁶A public opinion survey showed that 36.2% of the people thought Black's appointment was a bad choice, 12.8% rated it as fair, and 22% thought it was a good choice. Cantril, Public Opinion, 389.

³⁷Ickes, 240.

³⁸Blum, Years of Crisis, 390.

Congress was called for a special session in mid-November, and, by that time, it was impossible to publicly ignore the economic decline. "Since your adjournment in August," the President told Congress, "there has been a marked recession in industrial production and industrial purchases following a fairly steady advance for more than four years."³⁹ Of particular interest in the message to Congress was the complete absence of any mention of foreign affairs, even though the Brussels Conference was by then in progress.

Roosevelt's failure to follow up the "Quarantine Speech" with some positive action in the fall of 1937 has been explained by Sumner Welles:

From the purely political standpoint, moreover, any move by President Roosevelt to give American foreign policy even a suggestion of the international outlook it has today [1950] would have then been political suicide. It would not only have been virulently assailed by his partisan opponents, but it would have been equally obnoxious to the leaders of the Democratic Party upon whom the President was compelled to rely for the enactment of his legislative program.⁴⁰

Thus, domestic considerations were absorbing the majority of the President's interest. International events continued to be forced by the "bandit nations" with the democracies placed in a position of having to react to totalitarian initiatives.

On October 19 President Roosevelt released a press statement announcing the departure of Norman Davis for the conference in Brussels. Roosevelt took this opportunity to reiterate the message of his October 12 "fireside-chat:" "The purpose of this Conference will be to seek by agreement a solution of the present situation in China."⁴¹ Thus, the "positive measures to preserve peace"

³⁹Franklin Delano Roosevelt, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, With a Special Introduction and Explanatory Notes by President Roosevelt compiled by Samuel I. Rosenman (13 vols., New York: Random House, 1938-1950), 1937 vol., 490.

⁴⁰Welles, 6-7.

⁴¹DIA, 1937, 591.

call sounded in Chicago faded into "seek by agreement a solution" as Brussels approached. Apparently the President's ear was attuned to the isolationist frequencies.

Roosevelt was convinced that the way to achieve a successful conference was for a cooperative approach to leadership in which there would be "no one nation going out to take the lead--no one nation, therefore, in a position to have a finger of fear or scorn pointed at it."⁴² He also clearly recognized that any effective action would depend upon whether the United States, England, France, and Russia could cooperate. If so, he thought, "the Japanese could be halted and the dictators of Europe finally brought to more peaceful positions."⁴³

The French attitude toward the coming conference was distinctly indicated when Premier Camille Chautemps told American Ambassador William C. Bullitt that any action depended entirely on the United States. France was heavily preoccupied with grave problems in Europe and therefore vulnerable in French Indo-China. In case of a European war, France would prefer to have a friendly Japan in the Far East, unless the United States would be willing to guarantee France's Far Eastern positions. Chautemps said that "the United States alone of all the great powers was in a position to apply both its moral influence and force in the Far East. Whether the Nine Power Conference did anything or not would depend entirely on what action the United States was prepared to take in the Pacific."⁴⁴ The Vice President of the French Council of Ministers, Leon Blum, later told Bullitt "that if England, France, the Soviet Union, and

⁴²FR 1937, IV, 85.

⁴³William E. Dodd and Martha Dodd, Ambassador Dodd's Diary, 1933-1938 (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1941), 428.

⁴⁴For a report of these conversations see FR 1937, III, 629-30.

the United States should take a strong line unitedly there would be no danger of Japan attacking any one of them."⁴⁵ Blum was very pessimistic that no accomplishments would arise from the Brussels Conference unless the United States was prepared to guarantee with force, if necessary, both French Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies.

The British took a more constructive attitude toward the conference. They presented to Washington three courses of action with an analysis of some of the inherent problems associated with each procedure.⁴⁶ London recognized that the first objective of the Brussels Conference was to attain peace by agreement. Realizing that the chance of reaching a negotiated settlement was slight, Britain proposed that the conference take one of three approaches: defer any action while hoping for a change in Japan's attitude; do not take or promise any positive action, but morally condemn Japan; or, take positive action such as actively assisting China or putting economic pressure on Japan. The British Government was opposed to the first two choices as they were "tantamount to acquiescence in aggression" (appeasement by omission). Both options were believed to be a definite encouragement to the "peace breakers." Britain tended toward taking some positive action as indicated in the third alternative, even though pressure involving blockades or sanctions could lead to retaliation by Japan. Therefore, to be effective, any action would have to be committed by united nations which were willing to guarantee either military support or territorial integrity of third parties, or both, in the case of violent retaliation.

Assistant Secretary of State Hugh R. Wilson delivered Washington's reply and stated that considerations envisaging positive action "did not arise in a

⁴⁵Ibid., III, 636.

⁴⁶Ibid., IV, 89-91.

conference which had for its objective the finding of a solution...by agreement."⁴⁷ He also said that the United States was considering a procedure along the lines of an armistice followed by peaceful negotiation to find "a means of stabilizing conditions in the Far East."⁴⁸

In effect, the United States appeared willing to trade some Chinese political and territorial integrity for a peace that would lessen the danger of escalated involvement.

Russia voiced her pre-conference position with a constrained optimism. Optimism for a successful conference was based on the hope that the "Quarantine Speech" signified that the United States intended to take positive action with regard to the Far East conflict. The Russians consistently adopted a hard line and pledged their support, including the use of force if necessary, in cooperation with France, Britain, and the United States. The Soviet Government "is of the opinion that the Japanese should be made to realize that their present policy will not be tolerated and that strong action will be taken if they prove recalcitrant to the decisions of the Conference. The Soviet Union decries any attempt to save Japanese face."⁴⁹ In assessing the attitude of the Soviet Government, Joseph E. Davies, American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, reported a statement made earlier by the Soviet Ambassador to the United Kingdom: "...it was better to be isolated and to be right than to be associated and be ethically wrong as well as to be intellectually misled as to the means of effecting peace."⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Ibid., IV, 92.

⁴⁹ Ibid., IV, 101.

⁵⁰ Ibid., IV, 130-31 (also 87-88, 100-101, 116-17, and 119-20).

After World War II, Sumner Welles wrote: "We may not now like to remember it, but in 1937 only the Soviet Union maintained that peace is indivisible." Welles, 2.

At the opposite end of the scale from Russia was the Netherlands.

Although pessimistic about the chance of success, the Netherlands said that she could be expected to support such measures as were adopted by the powers if they did not involve her too deeply. The American Ambassador at the Hague reported that the Netherlands intended to be as inconspicuous as possible and to do nothing that would "tend to irritate Japan unduly."⁵¹

As expected by the conference participants, Japan rejected the invitation to attend the deliberations in Brussels. This refusal was based on several premises. Rationalizing her action as self-defense, Japan reasoned that the conflict did not fall under the purview of the Nine Power Treaty. Another objection was that the conference was identified with the League of Nations, which had cast reflections on Japan's honor by supporting China's position in the controversy. Finally, Japan thought that a gathering of so many powers at the conference would only serve to complicate the situation. The Japanese note concluded by suggesting that the conflict could be resolved if the Chinese Government adopted a policy of cooperation with Japan.⁵²

When President Roosevelt was notified that Japan had declined to attend, he decided that the conference should meet as scheduled, Japan's objections should be clarified, and a second invitation should then be extended to Japan.⁵³

Hull communicated the President's desires to Norman Davis, who was then in Europe, for implementation.

⁵¹FR 1937, IV, 97.

⁵²The text of the Japanese note is printed in DIA, 1937, 703-705.

⁵³Hull, I, 551.

Further activity in Washington resulted in a draft resolution being sent to Davis, prior to the conference, for use in case Japan refused the second invitation.⁵⁴

The instructions that accompanied the draft resolution indicated that the resolution should be presented to the conference by one of the smaller powers. In effect, this draft anticipated the failure of the conference to find an effective means to solve the "Undeclared War" and proposed that Germany, Great Britain, and the United States make themselves available to help China and Japan reach a solution based on moralistic principles. The intention was that the conference should then adjourn or recess for a period not to exceed one month.

Thus while Washington was trying to avoid any publicity as a "conference leader," she paradoxically was trying to direct the action of the conferees. Norman Davis' reply to the State Department indicated that he thought that if it was the "function to accomplish something constructive, we should not suggest or direct attention to a possible method of bringing the Conference to an end until there had been a concerted effort to make the influence of the Conference felt and to take any steps possible toward that objective."⁵⁵

The defeatist attitude of the State Department was to persist throughout the conference, and it became an additional handicap to the American delegation.

Meanwhile Ambassador Grew telegraphed to Washington that there was very little prospect that any form of collective mediation or offer of good offices would be acceptable to Japan. He said that an offer to mediate or to extend good offices coming from a single power (i.e., Great Britain or the United

⁵⁴FR 1937, IV, 123-24.

⁵⁵Ibid., IV, 132-33.

States) might be acceptable at the appropriate moment. In effect, Grew was saying that once Japan had achieved her objectives she would probably listen to any proposal that acquiesced in the accomplished objective. Grew advised that if there were ever to be any possibility of successful mediation the "Conference should adhere strictly to its mandate of attempting to promote peace by agreement and avoid any further expression of opinion on origins of conflict or responsibilities involved."⁵⁶

Anglo-American cooperation continued to be the real hub about which the success or failure of the conference would rotate. Anthony Eden stated the official British attitude in a speech delivered in the House of Commons on November 1. He said, in part, that "We all know that any action...that can be taken in this Far Eastern dispute does essentially depend upon the co-operation of the United States, and I say without hesitation...that in order to get the full co-operation on an equal basis of the United States Government in an international conference, I would travel, not only from Geneva to Brussels, but from Melbourne to Alaska, more particularly in the present state of the international situation."⁵⁷

American responsibility for the outcome of the conference was clearly recognized and bluntly stated by Edwin L. James: "And the immediate truth is that action and fairly quick action is all that will influence the Japanese in the successful war they are waging against China."⁵⁸ After citing that the

⁵⁶ Ibid., IV, 125.

⁵⁷ At the end of his speech, Eden referred to Mr. Herbert Morrison: "He used certain words to this effect: 'Would we in this dangerous and difficult Far Eastern situation go as far as the United States, in full accord with them, not rushing in front but not being left behind,' I wholly accept that definition as our guide." Eden, 607; or, DIA 1937, 60-69.

⁵⁸ NYT, October 31, 1937, 3.

conference was largely sponsored by the United States, James stated, "and so it is that the success or failure of the Brussels Conference will be largely an American success or failure."⁵⁹

The day before the conference opened the British and United States delegations met for substantial talks. The British advocated the use of positive action as a last resort. On the other hand, the United States avoided the topic of forceful procedures and emphasized the importance of educating public opinion. Eden summarized the British position by saying that "they would neither attempt to take a lead nor to push America out in front; that if constructive efforts failed he would be willing to join fully in direct pressure on Japan...."⁶⁰ Davis outlined the American position by saying that "we are going to make a genuine effort at the conference to produce some constructive result; that in the process public opinion would be crystallized...and that if our attempts at a constructive solution by agreement failed we would have to be guided thereafter by developments and by public opinion in the United States."⁶¹

After the meeting of the delegations, Eden and Davis continued with a private conversation, which has been recorded in Eden's memoirs.⁶² According to the memoirs, Davis related that President Roosevelt was deeply concerned

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰FR 1937, IV, 147.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Eden, 609-610.

During the course of the talks, Davis said that the United States would have to bear the brunt of any Japanese retaliation. Eden denied this, and said that Britain could and would send some ships to the Far East.

For more on the Eden-Davis talks, especially with regard to sanctions, see FR 1937, IV, 152-55.

The breakdown of Anglo-American military forces in Chinese waters indicated that Britain, suprisingly enough, had relatively more strength than

about the world situation and was anxious to cooperate in an attempt to stop the deteriorating international relationships. Davis also said that the President had told him that the Conference would either succeed, or, having failed, would present the world with a futile situation in which further action by the United States could not be ruled out. The President's view was that all liberty depended upon the course of the conference and the state of public opinion in America at the end of it. Roosevelt was afraid that Great Britain would be compelled to withdraw from the Far East because of tensions in Europe and that the United States then would have to face, perhaps alone, a greatly strengthened Japan. Therefore, Davis stated, Roosevelt wished that something could be done to check the tendency now.

The Brussels Conference opened on November 3 with a round of addresses that were more notable for their rhetoric than their content.⁶³ The Italian Delegate, Count Aldrovandini-Marescotti, who was expected to champion Japan's cause, spoke about some of the facts of power politics which he indicated were

the United States; of course Britain could not increase her strength very rapidly:

Combatant	U.S. Asiatic Fleet	Britain's China Squadron
Aircraft Carriers	0	1
Cruisers	1	6 (various sizes)
Destroyers	13	9
Gunboats, etc.	12	18
Escorts/Minesweepers	3	5
Submarines	6	17

Britain also had four battalions of troops available--roughly equivalent the number of U.S. troops, see Note 57 to Chapter II. For comparison, Japan had approximately 250,000 men in the field in China; and her navy consisted of 10 battleships or heavy cruisers, 5 aircraft carriers, 34 various sized cruisers, 103 destroyers, and 57 submarines. China, on the other hand, had no navy to speak of, but she did put about 500,000 poorly-equipped troops into the battle against Japan in North China. Statistics from NYT, August 15, 1937, 30; and, E.G. Hubbard, "The Far East," in the Survey of International Affairs, 1937 (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1938).

⁶³ The text of the speeches by Davis, Eden, and Delbos is printed in U.S. Dept. of State, The Conference of Brussels, November 3-24, 1937 [hereafter cited as Brussels Conference] (Washington: U.S. Govt. P.O., 1938), 21-31.

naively not publicly recognized by the majority. He stated that since Japan was not represented at the Conference, "full and frank communication" in accordance with Article 7 of the Nine Power Treaty would have meaning only for the conferees and in itself would not end the conflict. As he saw it, the practical role for the Conference was to lead the parties (Japan and China) towards a peace by bringing them together in direct negotiations. He concluded that his government "must reserve its opinion as to the [Conference] results which, however amicable the means employed, can lead to little more than platonic resolutions, and a further revelation of impotence unless it takes into account the realities...mentioned."⁶⁴ The Soviet Delegate, Litvinov, took a hard line position that was definitely anti-Japanese. He also warned the Conference that it was quite easy for an international organization, when confronted by a successful aggressor, to gain a momentary success by saying to the aggressor: "Take your plunder, take what you have seized by force, and peace be with you, and to say to the victim of aggression: love your aggressor; resist not evil."⁶⁵ Litvinov warned that that might constitute a superficial success for the Conference, but that such a success would "only provoke new cases of aggression."⁶⁶

The remainder of the first week of the Conference was spent mainly on procedural matters, a proposal to set up a small sub-committee to deal directly with China and Japan, and in drafting a reply to Japan's refusal to attend the Conference which included a second invitation. On November 6 Davis telegraphed to Hull that he had encountered a far greater degree of defeatism in the delegations than he had expected, and that the predominant attitude of nearly all

⁶⁴ Ibid., 31-32

⁶⁵ Ibid., 34.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

the continental powers was to appoint a negotiating committee and adjourn.⁶⁷ There is no evidence that Hull ever responded to this report.

A note was drafted asking the Japanese whether they would be willing to meet with a small sub-committee of the Conference. As soon as the text was approved, several delegates wanted to adjourn until the Japanese reply was received. Davis countered this desire with the argument that an unfavorable impression would be created if the Conference appeared to be dependent upon a favorable reply from Japan. As was becoming customary, deference was shown to the head of the American delegation, and adjournment was postponed.

In the meantime, the question of sanctions had again risen in talks between Davis and Eden.⁶⁸ This alternative was considered as a possible course of action if the present policy towards Japan failed. Davis stated that the United States would not impose any official sanctions, but would instead just refuse to buy Japanese goods. Eden's reply indicated that this method formed the most serious sanction against Italy and that it was most noted for its lack of success. Eden explained that there were two kinds of sanctions: effective and ineffective. The former ran the risk of war and to ignore this fact was dangerous. Britain was willing, Eden continued, to discuss these sanctions with the United States, but any considerations must be conducted realistically with a willingness to share the risks, whatever they may be, through to the end. Evidently Eden and Chamberlain were not of a similar mind

⁶⁷FR 1937, IV, 157.

Moffat had recorded in his diary on November 1, that he had "never known a conference where even before we meet people are discussing ways to end it." Moffat, 161.

⁶⁸For the substance of these talks see Eden, 611-612; and, FR 1937, IV, 160-62.

on the question of sanctions as the Prime Minister stated that he would on no account impose any sanction.⁶⁹

The editor of the French newspaper Echo de Paris summarized the first few days of the Conference by saying that "a good deal of harm has been done. Not only have the empty proceedings in Brussels aroused Japanese public opinion, but by making themselves contemptible once more, the British, United States, and French Governments have played into the hands of Joachim von Ribbentrop, the German promoter of the extension to Italy of the German-Japanese pact, supposedly directed against communism."⁷⁰ The editor was referring to the addition of Italy on November 6 to the Anti-Comintern Pact previously signed by Germany and Japan. There is no doubt that the German Foreign Office was closely watching the proceedings in Brussels. They could not help being impressed by the apparent lack of Anglo-American solidarity.

The night of November 10 the Secretary of State received two important documents from Europe. The first came from Davis and expressed doubt that the Conference could be prolonged indefinitely, as Washington had wished.⁷¹ Davis proposed three possible courses of action based on an anticipated rejection by Japan of the second invitation. The first alternative was for the Conference participants to admit failure and adjourn to consult with their respective governments. The most forceful proposal was for the conferees to agree upon some form of united pressure against Japan in the fields of trade or shipping. The third option, which was a compromise between the other two, was to agree upon a resolution that would advocate favorable treatment towards China, no recognition of Japan's conquests, and no military aid for Japan if she became

⁶⁹Eden, 612.

⁷⁰NYT, November 7, 1937, 37.

⁷¹FR 1937, IV, 175-77.

involved with a third party before she settled by agreement with China. Davis also strongly urged that the Neutrality Act be repealed or suspended insofar as it concerned the Sino-Japanese Conflict.

The second document was a logical and realistic analysis of the international situation by French Prime Minister Camille Chautemps as told to Ambassador Bullitt. In part of his analysis Chautemps said: "What I cannot understand is that you Americans from time to time talk as if you really intended to act in the international sphere when you have no intention of acting in any way that can be effective. I understand how much the President may desire to do something today to preserve peace; but I should infinitely rather have him say nothing than make speeches, like his speech in Chicago, which arouse immense hopes when there is no possibility that in the state of American opinion and the state of mind of the Senate he can follow up such speeches by action. Such a policy on the part of the United States merely leads the dictatorships to believe that the democracies are full of words but are unwilling to back up their words by force, and force is the thing that counts in the world."⁷²

Neither document evoked any new changes in American policy. Davis received a wandering reply from the Secretary of State that tacitly agreed that the way to proceed was to agree upon a resolution that advocated favorable treatment towards China, no recognition of Japan's conquests, and no military aid for Japan if she became involved with a third party before she settled by agreement with China. However, Hull stated that none of the measures should be proposed by the United States, as it was not in a position to enter into any agreements for implementing them.

⁷²Ibid., IV, 172-74.

Japan rejected the second invitation to the Conference on November 12 saying that she was acting in self-defense in China, and therefore the conflict did not come under the scope of the Nine Power Treaty. This final refusal extinguished any remaining hope of achieving practical results at the Brussels Conference. When the delegates reassembled on November 13, the Chinese representative made a last attempt to solicit a commitment from the conferees to exercise pressure against Japan. The American, British, and French delegates in turn spoke about the importance of respecting the sanctity of treaties and the rule of international law. However means of enforcing treaty sanctity and international law were not mentioned. The Conference session was then recessed to allow the delegations an opportunity to study the text of a proposed declaration. This draft was jointly submitted by the United States, Britain, and France. The expressed purpose of this declaration was to put the Conference on record as refusing to accept Japan's arguments as valid.

During this recess, a response was received to the recommendations forwarded previously by Davis to the State Department. Norman Davis felt very disappointed over the answer. In effect, Secretary Hull had cautioned him to initiate nothing more than platitudes. In view of the uncompromising Japanese reply to the second invitation, Davis decided to try to persuade the State Department to permit a resolution stating an expanded version of Stimson's non-recognition doctrine, which would include advocating a prohibition of loans and credits to the Japanese Government.⁷³ Two telegrams were sent by Davis to Hull on November 14 asking for participation in some "positive steps."⁷⁴ One of Davis' telegrams alluded to a policy of appeasement by omission of action: "What concerns me somewhat is that while Japan is now

⁷³Moffat, 182; and, FR 1937, IV, 186.

⁷⁴FR 1937, IV, 183-186.

nervous for fear that we may agree upon something positive, if we go on much longer without any evidence of intention to do anything more than preach she will soon become firmly convinced that she can pursue her course without any danger of interference."⁷⁵

The Department's reply arrived the next day and indicated that (1) the action requested was outside the scope of the Conference, and (2) a re-affirmation of the non-recognition doctrine was probably premature but could be presented if it were not phrased in explicit terms.⁷⁶

The Conference adopted its first declaration on November 15. Italy voted against the declaration, and Norway, Sweden, and Denmark abstained from voting on it. The heart of the declaration stated that the conferees "must consider what is to be their common attitude in a situation where one party to an international treaty maintains against the views of all the other parties that the action which it has taken does not come within the scope of the treaty and sets aside provisions of the treaty which the other parties hold to be operative in the circumstances."⁷⁷ The key words in the declaration are "common attitude." While this statement did not propose any specific plan of action, it did at least leave the door open for some form of cooperative action towards collective security.

Shortly after adopting its first declaration the Conference adjourned for a week. Ostensibly the recess was to give the delegates an opportunity to consult their governments about further proceedings for the Conference. Eden and Delbos left Brussels, and their departure seemed to signify that nothing more substantial could be obtained from the Conference.

⁷⁵ Ibid., IV, 185.

⁷⁶ Ibid., IV, 187-88.

⁷⁷ Brussels Conference, 52.

Davis made one more attempt at persuading Washington to accept a final resolution which would reaffirm a non-recognition policy and be reinforced by a policy of withholding loans and credits from the Japanese Government.⁷⁸ Hull's reply stated that the temper of the country was not disposed to favor pressure or threats toward Japan and that the sooner Davis left Brussels the less likely would be the probability that Washington could be accused of fostering such policies.⁷⁹ Moffat recorded in his diary that he personally was pleased with the State Department's replies, but that Davis, in view of the personal instructions he had received from Roosevelt prior to his departure, would have a hard time retreating as far as the State Department desired.⁸⁰

The Conference ended much in the same way it had begun. After the British and American delegates concurred in the wording of the final report, they persuaded the Belgian host to "circularize the text saying it had been prepared at his request by the British and American delegations...."⁸¹ The acceptance of the final report on November 24 went very smoothly. In the words of Jay Pierrepont Moffat: "The delegates were anxious to complete the funeral arrangements, bury the Conference, and depart."⁸²

The final report borrowed heavily from the Washington draft and is notable not for what it said, but for what it left unsaid. Appeasement by omission of

⁷⁸FR 1937, IV, 201.

⁷⁹Hull's reply also included a memorandum to be used in drafting a final report for the Conference. Davis was cautioned not to assume a position of "special leadership" in regard to the final report. Ibid., IV, 203-210.

⁸⁰Moffat, 184.

⁸¹Ibid., 187.

⁸²Ibid., 183.

action was carried to the point that the "final report" did not even exhort the Powers to "refrain from taking any action which might have the effect of weakening China's power of resistance," as the Resolution by the League of Nations had stated on October 6.

Under the camouflage of a temporary adjournment the Conference was, in fact, permanently closed.

The significance of this abortive period of diplomacy has been aptly summarized by Herbert Feis: "The failure of the Brussels Conference could not be made up. The last good chance to work out a stable settlement between China and Japan was lost in 1937."⁸³

The alternative to firm collective action for peace and stability was eventually war.

⁸³ Herbert Feis, The Road To Pearl Harbor (New York: Atheneum, 1965), 16.

IV

CONCLUSIONS

In the realm of international affairs the American public is enigmatic. A desire to influence or mold the morality of the world often has come into direct contradiction with an equally strong desire to avoid areas of open confrontation. Geographic isolation facilitated the growth of a tradition of viewing international problems with an objective detachment, which by its very nature assumed a superiority of insight.

During the 1930's, egocentrism was so ingrained in United States political thought and behavior that any connotation of "foreign" presumed an "un-American" significance (no pun intended). Indicative of the interest in world events during the critical year of 1937 is the fact that the "Sino-Japanese Undeclared War" was the only international item among the ten "most interesting" news stories selected by the public.¹ Failing to make the "top ten" were such newsworthy events as the Spanish Civil War, the Soviet Purge Trials, the Nyon Conference (Submarine Piracy in the Mediterranean Sea), and the Brussels Conference. With their thoughts turned inward, the populace rested, albeit uneasily, behind the isolationist wall of neutrality legislation.

The commencement of hostilities in the Undeclared War certainly did not evoke a mandate from the people for the Government to become "involved." Roosevelt could honestly declare, as he did in his "Quarantine Speech" and his October 12 "fireside-chat" that "America hates war." But hating war is not enough. Everyone hates war. The rational answer, which can be given just as easily by irrational governments and statesmen, to any question concerning the

¹Taken from Thomas A. Bailey, The Man in the Street: The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 118.

validity of war in the abstract is that war is bad, evil, or a number of other similar invectives. The essence of the problem is to determine the difference between the "abstract" and the harsh "reality," and then establish national objectives that take into account the historic proclivity of nation-states to resort to force-of-arms in international conduct.

If history has taught mankind anything of value, then certainly one of the most important lessons learned is that "peace-at-any-price" is an invalid concept. Even the most ardent pacifist is willing to lay down his life or violently fight for the goal of pacifism if he is subjectively committed. The suggestion here is that once war leaves the academic realm in which it is cloistered in the abstract, and enters the real world, it obtains an emotional price that can eventually be less than the cost of peace.

Assuming that war, or the threat of war, is a very real possibility, or even inevitability, in the affairs of the nation-states, the question then becomes how to defend the peace or escape the consequences of war with the least cost. Many arguments have been presented against the validity of a system of collective security. The breakdown or failure of this school of national security thought is attributed to the fact that it has not provided a workable answer. Three, and possibly four, major wars have been fought in the twentieth century in the defense of the ideal of a collectively safe and coordinate world. The fundamental reason why "collective security" has not been more successful is that it is conceived in abstraction and implemented in pragmatism. In a pure sense, the theory of collective security, whereby an association of nations collectively guarantees the security of each individual nation by sanctions or multilateral alliances against an aggressor, is unsailable; however, the entrance into active hostilities is a practical decision of the highest order that is made, almost without exception, on very much of a pragmatic basis.

All too often, when war is not treated as a reality, the short-run cost of voiding peace, or threatening voidance, is not exceeded in the furtherance of national objectives. Unfortunately, history has demonstrated that the long-run cost to maintain national objectives can inflate to an exorbitant price during the period of delayed recognition of war in the verity. This was the case of the Brussels Conference.

This study of America's diplomatic role during the early months of the Sino-Japanese Conflict not only "sets the record straight" but also illustrates many important lessons at the "tactical" level. Throughout the summer and fall of 1937, American diplomatic efforts were directed towards attaining the greatest political objective--world peace--by force of world opinion. However, during those days it was illusory thinking to expect that world opinion could be a viable force when there was no commonly accepted standard of world conscience. Moral suasion can only become a potent force when it is valued more dearly than the manifestation of power. Post World War II international polity has seen an increased usefulness of moral suasion, but in 1937 it was either ignored or treated as a political liability by the totalitarian powers. The profuse appeals for peace were probably interpreted as a sign of weakness and thus they produced the opposite effect than was intended for them.

The evidence clearly points to the fact that Roosevelt was fully aware that Germany, Italy, and Japan (the "three bandit nations") presented a real danger to world peace.² He also recognized that ultimately the United States would have to be aligned with Great Britain and the democracies against the totalitarian powers. The problem he faced was to find courses of action which were possible without sacrificing domestic reforms or widening the gulf

²Ickes, 213.

between isolationists and internationalists. That the country eventually emerged victorious over both the domestic crises and the Axis Powers is a tribute to Roosevelt's political skill. But, "ultimate victory" does not invalidate critical examinations of events that made up the means to the end.

The decision-makers of 1937 cannot be fairly faulted in their theoretical judgments with the added analytical knowledge provided by hindsight. However, what is important to note is that the opinion of the adversary is formed by practical and not theoretical judgments. The effectiveness of a foreign policy or diplomatic maneuver depends to a great extent upon the interpretation of the policy or maneuver by the opponent. When Roosevelt placed restrictions on government-owned shipping in September, the Japanese chose to interpret the move as being sympathetic to their cause; therefore, for all practical purposes, it became a diplomatic liability for the United States in her attempt to curb Japanese aggression.

The Japanese could not help being encouraged by the lack of effective opposition from the United States in 1937. When American diplomatic maneuvers were committed publicly to no more than mere protestations and vocal persuasions, Japan had little to fear. A wag of that period stated that, "Japan must be the owner of the world's finest collection of international censures, reproofs, protests, chidings, demurrers and anim adversions in existence."³ Unfortunately, "world frowns" did not check Japan's imperialistic ambitions. Records exposed at the conclusion of World War II revealed the attitude of Japanese officials in 1937:

³NYT, November 16, 1937, 22.

It was safe for the Foreign Office to assume that the economic sanctions Japan feared were not forthcoming. The aggression in China, the Foreign Office concluded, could continue without any foreign intervention.⁴

An important aspect of this study is the illustration of a definite maturity in British foreign policy during this period which has been overshadowed by the ignominious settlement of the Munich Crisis. To their credit, the British consistently did not hesitate to seize the diplomatic initiative both in negotiations with Japan and the United States. While the argument can be advanced that Chamberlain would not commit the London Government to action as forceful as Eden sometimes advocated, the British were at least desirous of some form of joint positive action, even if only a show of naval strength in Far Eastern waters.

A limited positive action would at least have carried the implication of an unwillingness to acquiesce in Japan's aggression, and may have had the additional results of either forcing Japan's Government into a more peaceful position or at least making the issue crystal clear to indecisive people around the world.

It should be remembered that Britain was primarily and heavily engaged in the problems of Europe, actively involved in the Spanish Civil War Non-Intervention committee and the Anti-Piracy Patrol in the Mediterranean, and passively involved in watching German moves.

On the other hand, the United States was truly the only uncommitted nation with the resources at hand to effectively influence decisions in the Far East. In fact, most of the twentieth century international agreements of any consequence in the Far East pointed to the natural leadership position of

⁴Quoted in David J. Lu, From The Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor: Japan's Entry Into World War II (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1961), 21.

the United States; the Open Door Policy, Russo-Japanese War Arbitration, the Washington Conferences in the 1920's, Stimson's Non-Recognition Doctrine, etc. However, in 1937 the Washington Government was possessed by an almost psychotic fear of being accused of "pulling British chestnuts out of the fire." Hampered with this fear, Government officials could only pursue courses of "independent" and sometimes "parallel" action.

With no one to say to Japan "You may go this far and no further in the pursuit of your objectives!," the evolution of a policy of appeasement occurred not by design but by default. The failure of the United States to take positive action, albeit justifiable in the context of public sentiment, was appeasement by omission.

The need for more vigorous action, although recognized and advocated in many instances, resulted paradoxically in virtual acquiescence in actions that were being vociferously condemned and berated. It would be naive to assume that this lesson was not learned well by the totalitarian powers. The degree to which appeasing Japan in 1937 contributed to the inevitability of World War II can only be imagined with the knowledge provided by hindsight.

An appropriate epitaph for this abortive period of diplomacy was provided by one of the international correspondents at Brussels:⁵

EQUITY HAS BEEN LEFT ON THE SCAFFOLD
AND AGGRESSION UNMOLESTED ON THE THRONE.

⁵NYT, November 8, 1937, 1.

CHRONOLOGY V

1933

- March 4. Franklin D. Roosevelt inaugurated as President of the United States.
- March 27. Japan formally withdrew from membership in the League of Nations.
- April 5. Secretary of State Hull advocated adoption of a discretionary arms embargo policy in a letter to the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs: "The enactment of this legislation would strengthen the position of this Government in its international relations and would enable us to cooperate more efficiently in efforts to maintain the peace of the world." Peace and War, 178.
- May 22. The United States at the Geneva Disarmament Conference offered tacit support to collective security action if some agreement on disarmament was reached.
- May 27. Secretary Hull urged President Roosevelt to reconsider his [Roosevelt's] approval of an impartial arms embargo as it was in direct "conflict with our position at Geneva." Hull, I, 230.
- May 31. Tangku Truce signed between Sino-Japanese forces.
- June 12. World Economic Conference commenced in London.
- June 22. The United States rejected a plan for temporary monetary stabilization.
- July 27. World Economic Conference adjourned without international cooperation for monetary stability.
- September 2. Italy and Russia signed a pact of friendship, non-aggression and neutrality.
- September 3. Chancellor Adolph Hitler renounced war except against Bolshevism.
- October 14. Germany withdrew from the Disarmament Conference.
- November 2. Secretary Hull told German Ambassador Hans Luther that "a general war during the next two to ten years seemed more probable than peace..." Peace and War, 193-194.
- November 16. The United States recognized the Government of Soviet Russia.
- December 28. President Roosevelt delivered a major address on foreign policy in which he denounced armed interventions. "The maintenance of constitutional government in other nations is not a sacred obligation devolving upon the United States alone.... The blame for the danger to world peace lies not in the world population but in the political leaders.... We are giving cooperation to the League in every matter which is not primarily political...." Peace and War, 204-208.

1934

- January 22. Japan's Foreign Minister, Koki Hirota, proclaimed Japan's special responsibility for the maintenance of peace in East Asia.
- January 26. Poland and Germany signed a ten year nonaggression pact.
- February 8. Senator Nye introduced a resolution to the Senate to investigate the munitions industry.
- February 17. Britain, France, and Italy issued a declaration that the integrity and independence of Austria had to be maintained.
- April 4. Russia and Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania renewed their nonaggression treaties until 1945.
- April 7. Finland and Russia renewed their nonaggression treaty until 1945.
- April 10. Japan's Foreign Office announced that it was absolutely opposed to any foreign interference in China.
- April 12. Senate approved the investigation of the munitions industry.
- April 13. Johnson Act became law. Financial transactions with nations in default on obligations to the United States prohibited.
- April 25. Japanese Foreign Minister, Hirota, stated that "Japan had no intention...of encroaching upon the territorial and administrative integrity of China...." Peace and War, 215.
- April 29. The United States reaffirmed to Japan the "rights" and "interests" of America with regard to China. Peace and War, 216.
- May 23-24. Congress approved a resolution to permit the President to embargo arms to the belligerents in the Chaco War.
- May 28. President Roosevelt embargoed arms to Paraguay and Bolivia.
- June 11. In speaking about his fear of possible war, Secretary Hull stated that "preparation for war but too often makes war inevitable." Peace and War, 232.
- June 12. The United States passed the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act.
- August 2. Hitler was appointed President of the Reich upon the death of Paul von Hindenburg. Hitler became both Chancellor and Fuehrer.
- September 10. Germany rejected any association in an Eastern Locarno Pact.
- September 18. Russia joined the League of Nations.
- September 29. Italy and Ethiopia issued a joint statement denying any intention of aggression against each other.

December 5. France and Russia signed a consultative pact.

December 27. Ambassador Grew warned Secretary Hull that Japan was determined to achieve "predominant political influence in China." Peace and War, 239.

1935

January 3. Ethiopia appealed to the League to ensure her safety.

January 13. Saar plebiscite held.

January 29. The United States rejected membership in the World Court.

March 1. The Saar returned to Germany.
German Air Force officially came into existence.

March 16. Germany instituted compulsory military service.

April 11. Stresa Conference conducted by Britain, France, and Italy to consider German rearmament.

April 14. Stresa conferees denounced German repudiation of the Versailles Treaty.

April 15-17. The League of Nations condemned Germany's unilateral denunciation of the Versailles Treaty.

May 2. France and Russia signed a mutual assistance pact.

June 12. Armistice signed in the Chaco War.

June 18. Britain and Germany signed a naval treaty limiting the German fleet to 35% of Britain's surface ships and to 45% for submarines.

June 27. France assumed freedom in naval arms.

July 25. Britain embargoed arms to Italy and Ethiopia.

August 18. Roosevelt appealed to Mussolini to avoid war.

August 31. President Roosevelt signed into law the first Neutrality Act.

September 14. Geneva General Disarmament Conference faded into permanent adjournment.

September 29. Ethiopia mobilized.

October 2. Italy announced national mobilization.

October 3. Italo-Ethiopian War commenced.

- October 5. President Roosevelt embargoed arms and munitions to Italy and Ethiopia.
- October 9. Secretary Hull informed the League that there was no need to ask the United States to participate in joint sanctions as "...definite measures have already been taken by the United States in accordance with our own limitations and policies." Peace and War, 284.
- November 11. Roosevelt stated that the "primary purpose of this Nation is to avoid being drawn into war." Peace and War, 289.
- November 18. The League of Nations invoked economic sanctions against Italy.
- December 1. Chiang Kai-shek became President of the Executive Yuan in China.
- December 7-8. Hoare-Laval peace plan negotiated in Paris for the Italo-Ethiopian War.
- December 22. Anthony Eden became Britain's Foreign Secretary. Sir Samuel Hoare resigned after his peace plan was loudly condemned as a sell-out to Italy.

1936

- January 15. Japan withdrew from the London Naval Conference. Conference had commenced on December 9, 1935.
- February 29. Neutrality Act of 1935 renewed until May 1, 1937.
- March 7. German armed forces occupied the Rhineland.
Germany offered to enter extensive negotiations with France, Belgium, and the Netherlands concerning demilitarized zones and nonaggression pacts.
- March 8. France and Belgium requested that the League Council consider Germany's entry into the demilitarized zone and repudiation of the Locarno Pact. (Britain and Italy had guaranteed the pact whereby the borders of France and Belgium were recognized by Germany.)
- March 9. Britain condemned Germany's occupation of the Rhineland and promised aid to France in case of an attack by Germany.
- March 12. The Locarno Powers, Britain, France, Italy, and Belgium, declared that Germany's action was illegal.
- May 5. Mussolini claimed victory in Italo-Ethiopian War.
- July 4. League of Nations recommended an end to sanctions against Italy.
- July 17. General Franco revolted to begin the Spanish Civil War.
- August 7. The United States stated it would not interfere in Spain.

- August 15. Britain and France pledged nonintervention in Spain and prohibited shipments of war materials.
- August 17. Germany accepted nonintervention in Spain as a stated policy.
- August 22. The United States placed a moral embargo on arms and ammunition to Spain.
- August 23. Russia accepted the nonintervention policy for Spain.
- September 9. Nonintervention Committee held its first meeting in London.
- September 15. The United States refused to join in the collective act of the Nonintervention Committee.
- October 14. Belgium proclaimed its status as a world neutral.
- October 25. Rome-Berlin Axis established for diplomatic cooperation.
- November 3. Franklin D. Roosevelt reelected President of the United States.
- November 14. Germany repudiated international control of the Rhine, Elbe, Oder, and Danube Rivers.
- November 18. Germany and Italy recognized General Franco as the head of the Spanish Government.
- November 25. Germany and Japan signed an Anti-Comintern Pact.
- December 1-23. Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace held at Buenos Aires.
- December 12-25. Chiang Kai-shek kidnapped by the communists.
- December 31. Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 and the London Naval Treaty of 1930 expired.

1937

- January 2. Italy and Britain signed a pact to maintain the status quo in the Mediterranean.
- January 8. Congress passed a resolution to prohibit export of war materials to Spain.
- February 4. General Senjuro Hayashi became premier of Japan.
- February 5. President Roosevelt announced his "court packing" plan.
- April 20. Nonintervention Committee commenced patrol of Spanish borders to prevent entrance of volunteers and munitions.
- April 30. Japanese Government defeated in general elections.

- May 1. President Roosevelt signed the "permanent" Neutrality Act into law.
- May 28. Neville Chamberlain became Prime Minister of Britain upon the resignation of Stanley Baldwin.
- May 29. The League of Nations denounced the bombing of open towns in Spain.
- May 31. General Hayashi resigned as Premier of Japan.
- June 4. Prince Fumimaro Konoye became Premier of Japan.
- June 23. Camille Chautemps succeeded Leon Blum as the head of the French Government.
- July 7-8. Confrontation between Chinese and Japanese soldiers at the Marco Polo Bridge signalled the start of the Sino-Japanese Undeclared War.
- July 11. Announcement made of a tentative agreement for settlement of the Sino-Japanese Incident. (Japanese terms, however, were not acceptable to the central Chinese Government in Nanking.)
- July 12. Secretary Hull expressed official concern about the hostilities to both the Japanese and Chinese Ambassadors.
- July 13. Britain proposed a joint Anglo-American-French appeal for moderation in the Sino-Japanese dispute. The United States refused and suggested that action along parallel lines was appropriate.
- July 15. France pledged full cooperation if Britain and the United States would intervene actively in the Undeclared War.
- July 16. Britain recommended to China and Japan that all troop movements cease on July 17. Neither side accepted.
China informed the signatories of the Nine Power Treaty of the status and threat of Japan in North China.
Secretary Hull released a statement of "principles of international conduct" and the United States position on international problems.
- July 18-19. France proposed that action be taken in accordance with the Boxer Protocol, the Covenant of the League, or the Nine Power Treaty.
- July 19. Japanese military authorities announced that an agreement was concluded with Chinese military authorities in North China. Nanking denied the validity of any such agreement.
- July 20. Britain proposed that a joint Anglo-American approach be made to China and Japan stating that if they would cease all troop movements the United States and Britain would then suggest methods to break the deadlock. The United States rejected the plan.
- July 22. The "court packing" plan was officially defeated.
- July 25-26. Fighting spread to Langfang and Peiping.

- July 27. Britain, France, and the United States made independent appeals to China and Japan to limit the hostilities.
- July 28. Britain renewed her July 20 proposal. Not accepted.
- July 29. Chiang Kai-shek stated that the conflict in North China was no longer a matter for local settlement. Japanese Diet was told that the Government would reject any interference by outside powers in the problem in China.
- August 9. Japanese naval officer and a seaman were shot at the Hungjao Airport.
- August 10-11. The United States and Great Britain made independent offers of good offices to Japan and China.
- August 12. Senator Hugo Black nominated to the Supreme Court.
- August 13. Battle for Shanghai commenced.
- August 13-30. "Pirate" submarines attacked non-Spanish shipping in the Mediterranean.
- August 15. USS Augusta bombed by Chinese aviators--no fatalities.
- August 17. Secretary Hull outlined a "middle-of-the-road" policy for foreign affairs.
The Navy Department announced that 1200 Marines were to be sent to Shanghai to assist United States nationals.
- August 18. Britain proposed that Japan withdraw forces from Shanghai and that the Western Powers would protect Japanese nationals. The United States rejected the British proposal.
- August 20. USS Augusta was hit by a bomb or shell of unknown origin. One sailor was killed.
- August 21. Russia and China signed a five year nonaggression pact.
- August 23. Japanese troops landed at Woosung.
Secretary Hull issued a statement of United States policy which made the principles of international conduct, as listed in his July 16 release, directly applicable to the situation in the Far East.
- August 25. Japan announced a partial blockade against Chinese shipping.
- August 26. Japanese aviators attacked British Embassy cars. Britain's Ambassador was wounded.
France appealed to the United States for joint cooperation in settling the Far East conflict.
- August 30. China informed the League of Nations of the events in the Sino-Japanese conflict.

American passenger ship President Hoover mistakenly bombed off Shanghai Harbor by Chinese flyers.

September 5. Japan extended its blockade to the entire China coast.

President Roosevelt announced that Americans staying in China did so at their own risk.

September 6. Britain and France called for a "piracy" conference to meet at Nyon.

September 9. Italy and Germany refuse to attend the "piracy" conference.

September 11. Japan began an offensive against Chinese armies south of Peiping and Tientsin.

September 12. China appealed to the League and invoked Articles 10, 11, and 17 of the Covenant against Japan.

September 14. President Roosevelt forbade government owned ships to carry munitions to Japan and China.

Britain, France, and Russia agreed to suppress "piracy" in the Mediterranean.

September 15. China's Delegate to the League warned of the possibility of a world conflict if Japan's aggression went unchecked.

League Council referred the Sino-Japanese dispute to the Far Eastern Advisory Committee.

September 16. American steamer Wichita ordered to unload planes bound for China at San Pedro, California.

September 19-25. Japanese bomb Nanking and Canton. Britain and the United States individually protested.

September 20. Leland Harrison, American Minister to Switzerland, was authorized to attend meetings of the Far Eastern Advisory Committee.

September 23. Germany refused to participate with the Far Eastern Advisory Committee.

September 25. Japan refused to participate with the Far Eastern Advisory Committee.

September 28. The League Assembly condemned Japanese aerial bombing in China. The United States endorsed the condemnation.

September 30. Italy consented to join the antipiracy patrol in the Mediterranean.

October 1. Britain proposed an economic boycott against Japan. The United States rejected the proposal.

October 5. President Roosevelt delivered his "Quarantine" Speech at Chicago.

- October 6. The Assembly of the League of Nations declared that Japan had violated the Nine Power Treaty. The United States concurred with the general conclusions of the League.
- October 9. Japan released a statement that denied that her action in China had violated any existing treaties.
- October 12. President Roosevelt emphasized to the nation that the coming conference in Brussels would attempt to seek a solution to the difficulties in the Far East by "agreement."
- October 15. Belgium released invitations to the signatories of the Nine Power Treaty for a conference to convene at Brussels on October 30 (later changed to November 3).
 Anthony Eden promised Britain's cooperation in the spirit of the "Quarantine" Speech.
- October 18. Stock market suffered its worst decline since September 24, 1931. Autonomy demanded by Sudeten Germans.
- October 19. President Roosevelt reiterated his October 12 statement to the nation and announced that Norman H. Davis was appointed the United States Delegate to the Brussels Conference.
 Britain proposed to the United States that methods of "positive action" be considered by the conferees. The United States stated that such methods were not appropriate for a conference that was to reach a solution by "agreement."
- October 26. Japanese commenced occupying Shanghai.
- October 27. Japan declined the invitation to attend the Brussels Conference.
- October 29. Germany declined to attend the Brussels Conference.
- November 3. Nine Power Conference commenced at Brussels.
- November 6. Italy joined the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact.
- November 7. Second invitation was sent to Japan to attend Brussels Conference. Offer was extended for Japan to meet with a smaller group to discuss Sino-Japanese differences.
- November 10. Japanese completed encirclement of Shanghai and the battle for Shanghai was effectively over.
- November 11. Italy joined the antipiracy patrol in the Mediterranean.
- November 12. Japan refused the second invitation to the Brussels Conference.
- November 13. China's Delegate to the Conference asked for concerted action to maintain peace in the Far East.
- November 15. Brussels Conference adopted a resolution labelling Japan as an aggressor.

November 15. The United States Congress met in a special session. Session called to combat domestic recession and to consider legislation which the President labelled as vital.

November 18. The Chinese Government announced that they were evacuating Nanking in the face of Japanese advances.

November 24. The Brussels Conference adopted its final report and adjourned. The final report was no more than a general condemnation of Japan's actions in China.

SELECTED READINGS VI

Diaries, Memoirs, and Biographies.

Fortunately many statesmen in 1937 kept detailed diaries of their activities. Joseph C. Grew's Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904-1945 (Boston, 1952), is based on his diaries and contains a wealth of information from Grew's Tokyo position. John Morton Blum's From the Morgenthau Diaries: Years of Crisis, 1928-1938 (Boston, 1965), and Harold L. Ickes' The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 (New York, 1954), contain mostly material related to the Treasury and Interior Departments, but occasional insight is given to cabinet meetings and some of the decisions behind foreign policies. On the other hand Jay Pierrepont Moffat's The Moffat Papers: Selections from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat, 1919-1943 edited by Nancy H. Hooker (Cambridge, 1956), deals exclusively with events in foreign affairs, one of which is the Brussels Conference. William Phillips' Ventures in Diplomacy (Portland, 1952), is a more generalized account of the Ambassador's diplomatic career, but it does have some useful information on developments in Europe during the 1930's.

Cordell Hull's The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York, 1948), provides an abundance of information about the conduct of foreign affairs during his tenure as Secretary of State. In all fairness it must be stated that the memoirs present a highly flattering portrait of Mr. Hull's foreign policy role. Anthony Eden's Facing The Dictators: the Memoirs of Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon (Boston, 1965), is the British counterpart to Hull's memoirs. Eden's account is rewarding in that it provides the British interpretation of many diplomatic exchanges which sometimes differs markedly from the American one.

Tom Connally and Alfred Steinberg, My Name Is Tom Connally (New York, 1954), is useful in the respect that it gives some insight to the personalities

of the main figures in the Administration; otherwise, it deals with domestic aspects of the New Deal and is of little value for foreign policy studies.

Fred L. Israel, Nevada's Key Pittman (Lincoln, 1963), presents a critical and unsympathetic look at the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Dorothy Detzer, Appointment on the Hill (New York, 1948), is a personal account of Miss Detzer's career as a lobbyist for the peace movement.

Several books have been written about Roosevelt by people who had worked closely with him in a personal sense. All of these books contain useful anecdotes and occasional glimpses of a complex personality in unguarded moments. Two of the more useful of these publications are Grace Tully, F.D.R., My Boss (New York, 1949), and Samuel I. Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt (New York, 1952). Raymond Moley's After Seven Years (New York, 1939) is a critical appraisal of Roosevelt and his policies. The book is slanted toward economic policies and consequently portrays Moley's belief in economic nationalism and mandatory neutrality. Francis Perkins, The Roosevelt I Knew (New York, 1946), is centered on the activities of the Labor Department, but it does present a friendly critique and analysis of Roosevelt's actions.

There are a large number of biographies written about Roosevelt. Unfortunately, the last few months of 1937 have not received as much emphasis as other more dramatic periods. Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History (New York, 1950), is almost devoid of information on this period in Roosevelt's life. The reason for this is that Hopkin's wife had recently passed away and he wasn't active in politics at this time. James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox (New York, 1956), is generally excellent with a full and penetrating treatment of the neutrality issue. Edgar Robinson, The Roosevelt Leadership, 1933-1945 (Philadelphia, 1955), is very sketchy in covering the events of 1937 and 1938; in fact, no

mention is even made of the Brussels Conference. Arthur M. Schlesinger's The Age of Roosevelt (Boston, 1957-1960), is a multi-volume study of Roosevelt's life. Unfortunately, the series presently ends with the reelection of 1936. Basil Rauch, Roosevelt From Munich to Pearl Harbor: A Study in the Creation of a Foreign Policy (New York, 1950), was written to refute revisionist interpretations of America's entry into the war. By far, the majority of the book is devoted to post-Munich events; thus the book is somewhat weak on the earlier events of 1937.

General Works.

Dorothy Borg, The United States and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1933-1938: From the Manchurian Incident Through the Initial Stage of the Undeclared Sino-Japanese War (Cambridge, 1964), is a thoroughly documented and detailed presentation of a subject that has been largely overlooked by the academic community. There are two excellent diplomatic histories which cover events leading to World War II. Herbert Feis, The Road to Pearl Harbor (Princeton, 1950), emphasizes Japanese American relations. Both European and Pacific events are detailed in the comprehensive history of William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation: The World Crisis of 1937-1940 and American Foreign Policy (New York, 1952).

Britain's foreign policy in the Far East (relative to Europe) has been largely ignored in academic writings. Nicholas R. Clifford, Retreat from China: British Policy in the Far East, 1937-1941 (Seattle, 1967), is a succinct description of the British withdrawal from prominence as the western leader in the Far East. United States foreign policy and growing influence in the Far East prior to World War II is adequately treated in Robert A. Devine, The Reluctant Belligerent: American Entry into World War II (New York, 1965). Extensive use of Japanese sources gives emphasis to Japan's foreign policy in

David J. Lu, From The Marco Polo Bridge To Pearl Harbor: Japan's Entry Into World War II (Washington, 1961).

Sumner Welles, Seven Decisions That Shaped History (New York, 1951), provides some insight to the politics behind the "decisions." In general, Welles tends to criticize Hull, perhaps too harshly, and to overstate his own position and role in foreign affairs.

The subject of isolation is presented well in Manfred Jonas, Isolationism In America, 1935-1941 (Ithaca, 1966). Jonas probes in great detail the attitudes, policies, and personalities that led to the strong sentiment for isolation throughout the country in the 1930's. Closely related to Jonas' study is Robert A. Divine's The Illusion of Neutrality (Chicago, 1962). Divine has traced the struggle to achieve and then circumvent neutrality legislation. He has made extensive use of government documents and presents his evidence in a concise manner.

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